

**The Complete Works of
Paulos Mar Gregorios
Vol. 1**

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Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

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Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

**Gregory of India Study Centre
SOPHIA BOOKS, KOTTAYAM**

Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios

Outstanding scholar, theologian, philosopher, polyglot and man of letters. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios sought to bring together in a holistic vision, several unrelated disciplines like philosophy, economics, political science, medicine, education, physics and theology.

Born in 1922 at Tripunithura, Kerala, the great scholar-bishop had his earlier stints in his homestate as a journalist and postal service employee. He proceeded to Ethiopia in 1947 accepting the job of a teacher there and in course of time became the Special Secretary to Emperor Haillie Sellasi. He had an exceptional educational career in Yale, Princeton and Oxford Universities. Returning to Kerala, he was ordained as a priest of the Orthodox Church. In 1967 Fr. Paul Verghese became the Principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary. In 1975, he was elevated as a bishop. Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios took charge of the Delhi Diocese of the Orthodox Church in July 1975.

Honours came unsought to Mar Gregorios. He had the good fortune to be the President of the World Council of Churches and the Indian Philosophical Congress. In 1988, he received the Soviet Land Nehru Award. His Grace travelled widely and showed an unusual intellectual courage to explore new paradigms in human thinking. He was visiting professor in several universities like the J. N.U. in New Delhi. The philosopher-bishop passed away on 24th November 1996 and his mortal remains lie entombed in the Orthodox Seminary Chapel, Kottayam.

Mar Gregorios has authored more than 50 books. *The Joy of Freedom, Freedom of Man, The Cosmic Man, The Human Presence, Enlightenment East and West, A Light Too Bright* and the spiritual autobiography *Love's Freedom: The Grand Mystery* are some of the most remarkable among these. Hundreds of his articles and lectures have been published in leading newspapers, and international magazines.

Publisher's Note

It is 22 years since HG Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios departed from us. His absence has created an emptiness that remains unattended or unsolved in our intellectual and spiritual scenarios.

Mar Gregorios, to this world, has been a great gift of God, in particular to India and the Malankara Church. However, it is a sad state of affairs that we have so far not been successful in forming a comprehensive biography of such a great man. We have not been successful so far, in collecting and publishing articles of His Grace, exceeding a thousand.

It is under such circumstances, Gregory of India Study Centre and Sophia Books have joined hands to do and execute whatever of relevance is possible in this area. In this volume, we have compiled a collection of some of the English writings of HG Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios who has his name all over the world as a Philosopher, a Theologian and a Scholar.

Most of the Gregorian writings in English stand collected, but we could publish only very few of them. There are many enthusiasts in contemporary days looking forward to see them published, as Gregorian thoughts are becoming more and more relevant. Therefore, Gregory of India Study Centre is taking up this challenge as its mission.

We have attempted to publish many Gregorian writings in the past, not even bothering about copyright issues, on our conviction that they are assets of humankind in their entirety. Readers may recall our publications of the English volume authored by the Metropolitan namely, 'The Faith of Our Fathers' in 1996. Likewise, a Malayalam book 'Matham, Marxism, Mathanirapekshatha' came up in 1998 and a compilation of his Malayalam writings in four volumes.

His Grace was too tired a few months before he left us, but we were fortunate to have an interview then. During this interview, we expressed our concern that the persons holding responsible positions were not too keen to publish His Grace's writings. His response to our concern appeared quite straight: "I don't think I am going to

show any interest in seeing my writings published. Let anyone who realizes their value publish them at their convenience.” Indeed, these words of His Grace enlightened us to take up these sorts of challenges without foreseeing consequences thereof.

His Grace Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios had a strong faith in his God who fed Prophet Elijah with Bread and Meat sent through a raven (1 Kings 17:4–6). We too wish that we might utilize our prudentially gifted talents that God takes us forward mysteriously. We thirst for Divine interference that impossibilities turn possibilities. As we experience the abundant inflow of God’s mercy these days, we are venturing to publish this volume courageously as we experience the Blessings of L/L His Grace in this endeavor.

We look forward to guide the readers making an entry into the world of Gregorian thought processes and that this volume ends up as a pointer for readers to understand this man and thinker Paulos Mar Gregorios. We are aware that our endeavor to introduce the philosophical insights of His Grace to humankind can never substitute the affection and love we experienced from His Grace. Yet, we present this enlightenment from the writings of His Grace to our generations, present and future, transcended by His Grace among co creations as the twilight of Divine Glory.

We are a bit perturbed with the financial burden associated with this challenge; however, we foresee batches of research scholars, keen and enthusiastic to learn the life and vision of Gregory of India. That ends up as our profit. Thanks to all.

Joice Thottackad

Kottayam

Nov. 15, 2018

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The Faith of Our Fathers

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

First Edition: 1969

Second Edition: October 1996

Revised Edition: 2018

Introduction

This little pamphlet has but a modest goal. It is intended primarily for University students, especially members of the Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement. Others may benefit from it - given sympathetic understanding.

There is no way of understanding Christianity without understanding the Fathers. The Bible is essential and primary, but not sufficient by itself. These men embodied in their lives and teachings elements of the faith which one without acquaintance with the authentic tradition cannot easily discern in the Bible.

The Bible, the Liturgy, the Fathers - these three form a complex unity. Any of these cannot be understood without some knowledge of the other two.

This pamphlet is meant only to begin to cultivate a taste for the Fathers. Students will have to do much more work once their interest has been quickened.

Three things characterized the Fathers - a dedicated life with an intense discipline of prayer, worship and fasting, a singular capacity to combine wide and deep secular knowledge with knowledge of the ways of God and an infinite and active compassion for the poor and the needy and a willingness to serve them.

We need the same combination in today's world and Church if mankind is to find its way forward. College students should at least have an opportunity to become exposed to the personality, life and thought of some of these spiritual giants of the past.

Several small pamphlets are to follow, if God wills, this slender publication.

This is not intended to be scholarly or pedantic. If it dispels at least one or two misconceptions about the Fathers of the Church, the author would feel satisfied.

Fr. Paul Verghese

Kottayam, Kerala
Epiphany, 1969.

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I

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

1. Who are the Fathers of the Church?

The term has no precise definition in the Orthodox tradition. It is usually applied to all the great doctors (malpans) and saintly leaders of the Church.

In the Roman Catholic Church there is a precise term Doctor of the Church, which the Pope officially confers on some great teacher of the past as occasion arises. They have more than 20 *doctores ecclesiae*. The four most important doctors for the Roman Catholic Church are Gregory the Great, Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome.

These are not regarded as official teachers of the Church by the universal tradition of the Church which we follow. Most of the errors of the Catholic and Protestant traditions can be traced back to these doctors.

On the other hand, some of the doctors whom they have recently accepted have always been the formers and shapers of our tradition. For example in 1920, the Pope declared St. Ephrem as a “Doctor of the Church.” He was always a towering figure for the Eastern tradition, both Greek and Non - Greek. The particular occasion for the Pope’s officially declaring St. Ephrem as a doctor of the Church was the need to use him as authority for certain doctrines about the Blessed Virgin Mary, which the Catholic Church wanted to declare officially. They thought that some of the passages in his poems about the Blessed Virgin being spotless (*lomumo in Syriac can mean immaculate in Latin*) could be used to support the doctrine of Immaculate Conception.

The Eastern tradition cannot exalt an ancient father according to need. It is only the consensus of the Church’s tradition that so exalts a father as an authoritative guide into Christian truth.

Some whom the Roman Church regards as Fathers have to be regarded as heretics by the universal tradition, which the Eastern Church follows.

For example Origen was a great scholar. He was the head of the *famous* Theological Institute in Alexandria in the 3rd century. A prodigious genius of towering proportions, he seems to have written some 3000 books. He was a great Biblical scholar, but freely used allegorical interpretation of the Bible and unbridled philosophical speculation which led him into several errors. He is supposed to have believed in metempsychosis (*punarjanma*) and the pre-existence of all souls. He died about 254 A.D.

His teaching was condemned as heretical by the Church of Alexandria in 400 A.D. The Roman and Syrian Churches agreed with the decision of Alexandria.*

The Greeks condemned Origen a century and a half later at the Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D. The Pope supported this decision.

Despite this, it is seen that Anglicans and Roman Catholics cite Origen as authority for certain doctrines.

Equally to be questioned is the authority of Tertullian, a North African lawyer (ca A.D. 160-220). Along with Augustine, Tertullian is regarded as an authority for doctrines of the Trinity and the

* Nevertheless it should not be forgotten that some of our great fathers have spoken very highly of Origen. St. Gregory Thaumarturgus, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Didymus and many others have indulged in the most unstinting praise of his intellect and sanctity. St. Athanasius defended his Orthodoxy. And yet we have to be careful in following his speculations. Whatever is good in him is now to be found in the Cappodocian Fathers and St. Athanasius. They are safe filters through which to assimilate the better elements of his prodigious genius.

Incarnation. The universal tradition has not accepted their teachings, and since these men are the sources of many of the errors of western legalistic - individualistic teaching, the Eastern tradition has been rather careful about not using them as authority for the faith of the Church.

The question then, “who are the Fathers of the church” cannot be too easily answered. We shall however try to give a minimum list towards the end of this chapter.

2. How did the Term “Father” Originate?

The Protestant tradition in general detests the word Father as applied to the great teachers of the Church. Neither do they like to address the priests of the Church as Father. They reserve this title to the heavenly Father and to one’s earthly father.

But not entirely. Even the most radical American Protestants use expressions like “Pilgrim Fathers” and “Founding Fathers.” The former expression, at least since the 18th century is used for the “pilgrims” who came to America from Europe in the ship “Mayflower” in 1620 and established the colony of Plymouth in Massachusetts.

In the Church, the name Father seems to have been used for bishops from the beginning of Christian history. The word *papa* (Pope) which means “father” was originally used for all bishops. In Arabic *papa* became *baba* and from it the Syrians got the word *bava* which we use often for our Father in heaven (ആകാശത്തിലുള്ള ഞങ്ങളുടെ ബാവ), for the Patriarch and Catholicos (പാത്രീയർക്കീസ് ബാവ, കാതോലിക്കാ ബാവ).

The term “Father” as applied to abbots of monasteries is also very ancient (Because the monks regarded the abbot or *Reesh-dairo* as their bishop, superior and spiritual father, he was called *abba* (*daddy* or Father) and the word *abbot* literally means father.

The use of the term for ordinary priests began only in the 19th

century, and was imported from England. In Europe as well as in the East, monks who were specially qualified to be spiritual counsellors and to hear confessions were called “Father confessors,” or spiritual fathers (“ghostly fathers” in medieval English; *yenafs abbat* in the Ethiopian language).

Later, when it became the habit for all priests to hear confessions, it was applied to all priests in Ireland, and the practice spread in England in the latter half of the 19th century. In Kerala we probably adopted this practice from the Anglo-Catholics.

But the use of the term ‘Father’ in a more restricted sense as applying to the great teachers of the Church dates from the 4th century. The 318 bishops who participated in the first ecumenical synod of Nicea were referred to by their successors as “the Fathers of Nicea” or “the 318 Fathers.” The term referred to their special authority in matters of doctrine.

Later on, St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzen, still in the 4th century, in their disputes with the heretics, used other “fathers” as authority to prove the right doctrine. In Chalcedon “the faith of the Fathers” became a synonym for the true faith and both sides in the debates used the authority of St. Cyril to prove their point.

3. Who was the Last Father?

This question is difficult to answer. The Roman Catholic Church defined a Father as characterized by four things - Orthodoxy of doctrine, holiness of life, the approval of the Church, and antiquity.

The Roman Catholics have a very large list of Fathers, and their last Father in the West was Isidore of Seville (died 636) and in the East John of Damascus (d.749). The Greeks also close their patristic period with the last of their seven council’s (787), i.e. with John of Damascus.

For our tradition the patristic period comes to a close a little earlier, judging by the list of Fathers commemorated in the

intercessory prayers (*thoob-den*) of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The last fathers mentioned in the fifth *Thoobden* is Mar James of Edessa who died in 708 and Mar Isaac of Nineveh who died in 700 A.D.

But there is no reason why the list should be finally closed there. We shall here adopt a different scheme, which will leave the patristic period still open and not concluded.

4. Four Groups of Fathers

For the sake of convenience in study, we shall divide the Fathers into four groups.

- (a) The Apostolic and Pre - nicene Fathers.
- (b) The Fathers of the three Ecumenical councils.
- (c) The post - conciliar Fathers.
- (d) The Monastic Fathers.

The Apostolic fathers were direct disciples of the Apostles like Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Rome, and Polycarp of Smyrna.

Among the other pre-nicene Fathers we include the fathers of the second and third centuries like Clement of Alexandria, Ireneus of Lyons etc.

By Fathers of the Three Ecumenical councils we mean not only those bishops and teachers who took part in the Synods of Nicea (325) Ephesus (381) and Constantinople (431) but also the Fathers who lived and taught during the period 300-450 even if they were not present at the councils.

By post-conciliar Fathers we mean those who were teachers of the universal Church (Malponie-de-thibel), who belong to the true faith. Outside this category there are some teachers who are fathers for the Greek and Latin Churches, but who are not authoritative for us like Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, and much later, Gregory Palamas.

By monastic fathers we mean the developers of the great ascetic tradition of the Church i.e. St. Antony, St. Pachomius, St. Makarios, St. Simeon Stylites, St. Ephrem and so on.

II

The Apostolic Fathers and Other Pre - nicene Fathers

The title Apostolic Fathers was created only in the 17th century in the course of the debate between the Reformation (Protestant) and the Counter - Reformation (Roman Catholic). The term is often rather loosely applied to all writings of the period immediately following the age of the apostles. More strictly, Apostolic fathers are the direct disciples of one or more of the Twelve Apostles.

Among those now regarded as Apostolic Fathers in the western Churches are the following:

1. St. Clement of Rome

Flourished around A.D. 96. He was the third bishop in Rome, and was probably a disciple of both Peter and Paul. If he is the one referred to in Philippians 4:3, then Clement was a co-worker of St. Paul.

2. St. Ignatius of Antioch (Ca 35 - Ca 107 A.D.)

He was the third bishop of Antioch, the first having been St. Peter himself. A disciple of Peter, Paul, John and the other Apostles who were in Antioch, he is a great father, not only of the Syrian tradition, but of the whole universal Church. He was martyred in Rome by being thrown to wild animals.

3. Hermas (2nd century)

Very little is known of this Father except through his interesting book "The Shepherd." He was a rich man who once denied the Lord, did penance and was reinstated, His book was almost regarded as scripture by the ancient Church and was widely used for the instruction of candidates for baptism.

4. St. Polycarp (ca 69 - ca 155)

The Bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor, he was probably a disciple of St. John who spent his last years in Ephesus. He was burnt to death at the age of 86 for refusing to deny his faith.

The importance of these fathers for understanding the tradition of the Church is enormous.

In the first place they make it very clear that there were many things which the Apostles taught the leaders of the Churches established by them and which do not appear in the New Testament. The authority of these apostolic fathers witness to the fact that only a portion, albeit the most important portion, of the Apostolic tradition was actually written down in the New Testament.

A few questions from these fathers will show their importance for understanding the true Apostolic teaching, which cannot be got from the Bible alone:

“Since we have gazed into the depths of divine knowledge, we are bound to perform in due order all that the master bade us accomplish at their proper reasons. He ordered that the qurbanas (*prosphas* in Greek) and services (*leitourgias*) should be performed at their appointed times and seasons, not at random and without order, and also by his own supreme will he himself settled where and by whom these are to be performed, so that all might be done in a holy manner and be pleasing and acceptable to his will. For they who make their qurbanas at the appointed times are pleasing to him and blessed, for they do not transgress in following that which was ordained by the Lord. To the Archpriest (bishop) is appointed a special liturgical service, the priests have a special place reserved for them, and the levites have their own deaconate, to the men of the people (laity) are ascribed functions

appropriate to the laity.” Clement of Rome. *I Epistle to the Corinthians* 40 (about A.D. 96). And again “And our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop’s office. So for this reason, since they had perfect fore - knowledge they appointed the above - mentioned (bishops and deacons) and later laid down a rule so that if there men die, other approved men can succeed to their liturgical office.”

Ibid para XLIV.

The following passage is from the epistle of St. Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans (VIII):

“Flee from divisions, as the beginning of evil. Follow, all of you, the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father; and follow the priesthood (presbytery) as the Apostles. Moreover, reverence the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no man do anything related to the life of the Church apart from the bishop. Let that Eucharist be regarded as valid which is under the bishop or his delegate. Whenever the bishop is seen, there let the people also be; even as wherever Jesus Christ is, there the Catholic Church also is. It is not permitted either to baptize or to hold an agape - festival apart from the bishop. That which he approves, this is pleasing to God also, so let all your practices be secure and valid.”

In his epistle to the Philadelphians, he affirms that this was not one of his own ideas, but that the spirit of God constantly urged him, so that in the assembly he spoke by the prophetic power of the Holy spirit (not in an unknown tongue): “Give heed unto the bishop and the presbytery and deacons.”

On the question of the place of the Holy Eucharist in the Church,

the Bible does not give us adequate information about what the Apostles taught. We learn a great deal about it from St. Ignatius, and the document called the Didache, which contains the clear teaching of the Apostles in this regard.

Christian heretics who did not respect the Eucharist were common in the very times of the Apostles. They claimed that they were “spiritual” and therefore did not need “material” sacraments. By the same token they denied the flesh of our Lord. They held that Jesus Christ was God, but that his flesh was only an appearance. Hence they are called Docetists (from *dokeo* - to seem). St. Ignatius says about them:

“They (the Docetists) hold aloof from the Eucharist and the common prayer, because they do not acknowledge that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who suffered for our sins, and whom the Father in his loving kindness raised from the dead.”

(Epistle to the Smyrnaeans 7)

If that is what the disciples of the Apostles taught, then those who today deny that the Eucharist is the very body and blood of our Lord have also gone astray from the Apostolic tradition. Here is another quotation from St. Ignatius’ epistle to the Philadelphians (iv):

“Take care to hold but one Eucharist. For one is the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is only one cup of His blood for our unity; One *madbeha* (place of sacrifice), and one bishop with the priests (presbyters) and deacons; my fellow-servants, so that all that you do may be done according to God.”

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The Didache, or to give its full title, “The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles through the Twelve Apostles”, is now believed to be a

very ancient document, older than several of the books of the present New Testament. Though English writers usually place it in the early second century, recent Catholic scholarship in France has established its date around 60 A.D.

This book contains some notes of the disciples of the Apostles as to how they were to baptize and to celebrate the Eucharist. It concludes:

“On the Lord’s day, assemble together and break bread and give thanks, first making public confession of your faults, that your sacrifice may be pure. If any man has a quarrel with a friend, let him not join your assembly until they are reconciled. So that your sacrifice may not be defiled. For this is the sacrifice spoken of by the Lord: “In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice” (Mal. 1:11, 14).

“Appoint therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord; kindly men, who are not greedy for money, men who are genuine and tested...” (Didache XIV, XV).

It is clear from these that those who today deny that the Eucharist is a sacrifice, and those who do not have bishops and deacons, do not follow the Apostolic teaching.

* * * * *

Among the pre-nicene fathers we should mention a whole school of great teachers who flourished in Asia Minor, present Turkey. The theology of the universal Christian Church was shaped mainly in three centers - Antioch, Alexandria and Asia. There are few Greeks and Latin’s who have contributed very much to the development of the authentic tradition. Most of those who are known as Greek Fathers came from Asia or Africa.

Melito of Sardis was one of these great Asian Fathers. In the

Syrian and Greek Churches still bishops are named after him (Mar Malatios / Meliton). He is known to have written many books, most of which are lost to us, except a sermon on Easter, and a few small fragments.

More important is Irenaeus, the great Asian theologian of the second century. He came from Smyrna and was a disciple of the great martyr-bishop Polycarp (155). He left Asia for Rome and Lyons (France) and thus took the Asian tradition to the west. He evangelized France and became bishop of that country. His works were used by Augustine more than two centuries later, as a basis for his own doctrinal writings. Irenaeus was widely used in Syria and Armenia at one time.

His greatest contribution to our faith lies perhaps in the area of understanding what Tradition itself is.

Tradition is the continuing stream of the mind of the Church. Irenaeus has clarified for us the meaning of this Apostolic tradition. Certain heretics had claimed “Apostolic succession” for their own errors, by pretending that they were the disciples of the disciples of the Apostles. Over against this false claim to “Apostolic succession” made by heretics, Irenaeus lays down the true view of Apostolic Tradition. Since his treatment of the subject is too long to quote, we give below a summary.

The Apostles proclaimed the gospel to all, taught it to their disciples, and later reduced some of it to writing. “All and each of them was equally in possession of the gospel of God” - not just Peter. St. Mathew wrote down the Gospel in Hebrew. Mark recorded what St. Peter taught. Luke wrote down the gospel as St. Paul taught it. And finally St. John while resident in Ephesus (Asia) wrote down a version of his own. All tradition must agree with these four gospels; the heretics teach something different.

But when the heretics are refuted from the Gospels they say that the Bible is not final, and that there is a secret oral tradition, which

has been handed to them from the Apostles. The only way of testing these false claims to Apostolic tradition is to check them with what has been handed down from generation to generation in the Churches which the Apostles themselves established. None of the bishops whom the Apostles appointed taught the kind of rubbish the Gnostic heretics were teaching (it would be very useful to apply this test to many of the teachings of contemporary sects). If there was any secret teaching of the Apostles, they must have handed it down to those bishops to whom they had entrusted the Church.

There are so many apostolic Churches, where there is an unbroken line of apostolic succession. In Rome the teaching of St. Peter and St. Paul is maintained. The whole list of bishops from the Apostles to this day can be produced. There is a similar tradition in Asia, (which is the one in which Ireneus himself grew up). In Smyrna Polycarp was taught by the Apostles, and was put in charge of the whole of Asia. "He always taught what he learned from the Apostles, which the Church continues to hand on, and which are the only truths. The Churches in Asia all bear witness to this, as do those who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time."

So with Ephesus, which Church St. Paul founded and where St. John taught. And now I quote:

"Since there are so many clear testimonies, we should not seek from others for the truth which can easily be received from the Church. There the Apostles, like a rich man making a deposit, fully bestowed upon her all that belongs to the truth, so that whoever wishes may receive from her the water of life. She is the entrance to life, all the others are thieves and robbers.* Therefore we ought to avoid them but to love with the greatest zeal the things of the Church, and so to lay hold of the tradition of the truth. What if there should be any dispute

* cf. Rev. 22:17, John 10:7, 8.

about some matter of moderate importance? Should we not turn to the oldest Churches, where the apostles themselves were known, and find out from them the clear and certain answer to the problem now being raised? Even if the apostles had not left their writings to us, ought we not to follow the rule of the tradition, which they handed down to those to whom they committed the churches? Many barbarian people who believe in Christ follow this rule having (the message of their) salvation written in their hearts by the spirit without paper and ink. Diligently following the old tradition, they believe in one God, maker of heaven and earth and of all that is in them, through Christ Jesus the son of God, who on account of his abundant love for his creation submitted to be born of a Virgin, himself by himself uniting man to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and risen, and having been received up into splendour, is to come in glory as the Saviour of those who are saved, and the judge of those who are judged, and will send into eternal fire those who alter the truth and despise his Father and his coming. Those who believe in this faith without written documents are barbarians in our speech, but in their convictions, habits, and behaviour they are, because of their faith, most wise, and are pleasing to God, living in all righteousness and purity and wisdom. If any one should preach to them the inventions of the heretics, speaking in their own language, they would at once stop their ears and run far away not enduring even to listen to such blasphemous speech. So by that old tradition of the apostles they do not even take into their minds whatever their impressive words may mean.”

Against Heresies III, 4. Engl. Translation from Cyril Richardson,

Ed. *Early Christian Fathers* (Library of Christian Classics. Vol. 1, pp. 374-375).

Many things we learn from the disciples of the Apostles, which are not directly in the Bible.

First, on many fundamental questions of faith the Bible used by itself without knowledge of the Tradition of the Church can lead to heresy. All the early heretics used the Bible in one form or another. The Tradition of Christian truth can be found in its fullness only in the Church. No one can simply take the Bible and sit down and construct a faith out of it.

What the modern sects often present to us as Biblical truth is little more than their own particular tradition, which may be a local German or American or English or Dutch tradition of a few hundred years ago. Only in the Universal tradition of the Church can we learn the Christian truth and therefore also see the Bible in its true light.

We learn, however, also that the disciples of the Apostles had a very great respect for the Bible, and were very thorough in their knowledge of the Old Testament and the writings of their masters the Apostles. In the Orthodox tradition we have no reason to neglect the Bible. The more authentic knowledge of the bible we have the more truly Orthodox we become.

We learn also, how important the Church, the Priesthood, and the mysteries of the faith (the sacraments) were for the disciples of the Apostles. The denial of these realities and a dependence on the Bible alone (*sola Scriptura*) can be a great error. The faith is truly experienced and known only by membership in the Church, which has a responsible and properly Apostolic ministry and a high tradition of the Christian mysteries. Outside that Church even the Bible becomes a snare and a stumbling block.

III

The Golden Age of the Fathers

The period from the Ecumenical Council of Nicea (325) to the Council of Chalcedon (451) has been called the Golden age of Eastern Patristic literature.

There are many reasons for this flourishing of Christian thought such as never took place before or after.

The official approval of Christianity by Emperor Constantine in 313 has sometimes been deplored by historians as the beginning of the decline of Christianity. It is true that the Christian Church was no longer persecuted and therefore there was no more opportunity to become martyrs. But martyrdom is not the only way of expressing the Christian faith.

Constantine's Edict of Milan placed the Church in a position where it had to take this world more seriously. Today we live in the same situation. It is not sufficient to think about the other world alone. We have to give expression to our faith here and now, in this world. The Church was forced to take an active and responsible role in politics, in culture and in education because of the Constantinian settlement. Previously the Church could condemn the Roman Empire as Babylon the harlot which persecutes the faithful. Now the Empire was in the hands of the Church, so to speak.

And it is in the context of this new situation that the Eastern Fathers developed their thought.

The new freedom for the Church also meant greater freedom for heresy. So the denial of Christ's deity and of the doctrine of the Trinity could come to the surface and gain support among the people and even with the Emperor. And the Church Fathers were able to clarify these doctrines without fear of the Emperor, even at the risk of their very lives. True thought, the right glorification of God, which is orthodoxy, thus became the new form of martyrdom.

It was also at this time that some of the most learned of men applied themselves to the clarification of Christian thought. What an Origen had attempted and failed in the time of persecution, Athanasius and the Cappodocian Fathers successfully achieved in the age of the Councils, since the debate could be open and public. Origen had no heretic or other person really to question his views. The Fathers of the golden age were constantly under fire from heretics and had to sharpen their thoughts on the anvil of controversy.

It can be said that true discussion of the most fundamental theological questions took place for the first time in the fourth century. And by the grace of God, there were a large number of learned and keen minds who could clarify the issues.

It is also true that there were, during this period, some important theological academies, which could both produce the scholars, and debate the issues at the same time. Chief among these were the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch. There were three other schools - one in Caesaria, the capital of Palestine (a daughter institution of Alexandria, started by Origen), and two Syrian schools in Edessa and Nisibis. There were no Church schools among the Greeks or Latins. Theology, even in the fourth and fifth century, was mainly a product of Asia and Africa, though most of the writing was in Greek, the *lingua franca* of the empire.

We do not have the space here to list all the important fathers or to summarize their teaching. We give below very brief sketches of six of the most important fathers of this period. Mar Athanasius, Mar Baeslios, Mar Gregorios Nazianzen, Mar Gregorios of Nyssa, Mar Ioannes Chrysostomos, and Mar Cyrillos of Alexandria.

Taking the entire period from 325-451, the following Fathers are of some importance, but we cannot deal with them here:

1. Alexander of Alexandria.
2. Mar Didymus the Blind.
3. Mar Theophilus of Alexandria.

4. Mar Eustathius of Antioch.
5. Mar Eusebius of Caesarea, the Church Historian.
6. Mar Kurillos of Jerusalem.
7. Mar Dioscurus of Alexandria.

In addition to these there were the Monastic Fathers, including St. Ephrem who will be treated in a later pamphlet. We are also omitting two great teachers of this period whose Orthodoxy is in question: namely Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus.

IV

St. Athanasius (Ca. 296 - 373)

One of the most heroic figures of the ancient Church, he fought the battle against the heresy of Arius almost single-handed. He attended the Council of Nicea (325) as Deacon and Secretary to the then bishop of Alexandria, Alexander. In 328, when Alexander died, he became bishop, or Pope of Alexandria (the Coptic Church). Because of his opposition to Arianism, he was exiled at least four times from Alexandria, after he became bishop - in 336 (till 337), in 339 (for seven years), in 356 (till 361) in 362 (till 363) and again in 365 (till 366). He died at Alexandria on the 2nd of May 373 A.D., before he could see the final victory of his theology at the Council of Constantinople in 381.

It was during his papacy that the Ethiopian king became a Christian along with all his subjects, through the work of Syrian missionaries.

He introduced monasticism into the west, where it seems to have been unknown before. His “life of St. Antony” is one of the classics of Monastic literature.

But most of his writings were directed against the heresy of Arius and in defense of the teaching of the Council of Nicea.

Though not a great classical scholar, his knowledge of the scriptures, his clear mind, and his skill in debate made him a formidable enemy of heretics. It is from his works against Arius that we learn what the heresiarch was teaching. But his greatest contribution is that he established for ever the true tradition of the Church that Jesus Christ is the son of God, unoriginate, uncreated, of the same essence with the father, God of God.

The two main articles of the Christian Faith are faith in the Holy Trinity and faith in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In both matters Mar Athanasius laid the foundation of true understanding. Athanasius said clearly “God became man that man may become God.”

V

2. Mar Baselius of Caesarea (St. Basil, the Great - Ca. 330-379)

Mar Baselius, one of the towering giants of ancient Christianity, was an Asian by birth. He is one of the Cappodocian fathers. Cappodocia was a province of Asia (present - day Turkey). His parents lived in Caesarea, the capital of the province. It was a remarkable family. Mar Baselius' father the elder Basil, had five sons and five daughters. Three of the sons became bishops - Mar Baselius in Caesaria, Mar Gregorius in Nyssa and Mar Pethros in Sebaste. The eldest sister of Mar Baselius, Martha Makarina, deserves a chapter to herself, for she was both a saint and a scholar, the founder of monastic communities for women, and the teacher of her brothers who became bishops. Even as a bishop, says Mar Gregorius, he learned from his sister the great mysteries of the faith.

Mar Baselius was educated in the best pagan schools of his time, and was thus one of the most educated of his contemporaries. He studied first from his father and grandmother, who were themselves both great scholars. He then studied in his native Caesarea, then moved to Constantinople, and finally to Athens, the centre of all learning at that time.

After all his studies, which he completed with the greatest honours, he returned to his native Caesarea, proud as a peacock as his own brother says. He began his career as a rhetorician (secular professor) in his own native Caesarea, but as Mar Baselius himself says in his letter (no. 223).

“I had wasted much time on follies and spent nearly all my youth in vain labours, and devotion to the teachings of a wisdom that God has made foolish. Suddenly I awoke as out of a deep sleep. I beheld the wonderful light of the Gospel truth, and I recognized the

nothingness of the wisdom of the princes of this world that was come to naught. I shed a flood of tears over my wretched life, and I prayed for a guide who might form in me the principles of piety.”

He was soon baptized, after having been duly instructed by his sister Makarina. He then travelled in Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia to learn from the many monks who lived in these parts.

When he returned, he distributed his wealth among the poor (he was a very rich man) and went in to solitude for prayer and fasting. Soon others joined him, including his friend and classmate Mar Gregorios of Nazianzus, though only temporarily. The community grew and it became a great spiritual centre of Christianity in Asia. Mar Baselius wrote, in co-operation with Mar Gregorios Nazianzen, the rules for a monastic community. These rules are the basis for all eastern monasticism, and for some forms of western monasticism like that of the Benedictines.

In a short time he founded other monasteries, and his sister Makarina started a convent for women across the river from the men’s monastery.

Together they established hospitals for the sick, nursing homes for lepers, homes for the poor, hotels for travellers and strangers; and the monasteries soon became a spiritual city, where the poor and the destitute praised God for His wonderful ways.

In addition to his great learning and spirituality, St. Basil was, like Mar Athanasius, a man of very great personal courage. He stood up to the Emperor Valens when pressured to support the Arian heresy. When the Emperor sent his Viceroy to threaten Mar Baselius with confiscation of goods, torture and exile, Basil replied that he had nothing to be confiscated except a cloak and a few books, and as for exile, anywhere in the world would be his home. As for torture, he said his body would give up its life at the first blow, and that

Modestus the Viceroy would be doing him a favour by sending him off to God so quickly.

“Death would be an act of kindness, for it will bring me nearer to God, for whom I live, and for whom I have been created, ... and to whom I hasten.”

The pagan Modestus was surprised by this bold answer and said: “No one has spoken to me with such boldness before.” Mar Baselius replied:

“Perhaps you have never met a Christian bishop before. Fire, swords, beasts and the instruments for tearing the flesh we desire as delights rather than horrors. Afflict us, torture us, threaten, do all you can, enjoy your power, but let the Emperor also know that in no way can you win us over to embrace untruth, though you threaten with the cruellest deeds.”

That was the end of the Emperor’s opposition to Basil. Both the Emperor and the Viceroy were deeply impressed. On another occasion the Viceroy (Prefect) of Pontus threatened St. Basil, by calling him to court and saying, “I will tear out your liver.” St. Basil’s reply: “Please do, it gives me much trouble where it is.”

Mar Baselius bowed to no one. He once appealed to Pope Damasus in Rome to intervene to settle some of the quarrels in the East. Pope Damasus’ reply was, as was often the case with papal letters in those days, a bit superior sounding. Mar Baselius’ reaction is in his epistle no: 239, addressed to a fellow-bishop:

“The news of the West you know already. ... Really lofty souls, when they are courted, get haughtier than ever. ... If the Lord be propitious to us, what other thing do we need? If the anger of the Lord lasts on, what help can come to us from the arrogance of the west? ...”

Mar Baselius' great theological contributions were three:

(a) Against Arius and his disciples he established the full deity of Christ. He thus completed the work of Mar Athanasius.

(b) He established clearly the deity of the Holy Spirit.

(c) Thus he established a full doctrine of Holy Trinity as three hypostases in one ousia.

He was also a great monk who laid down the basic principles of community monasticism - a balance between prayer, study and work and the need to serve one's fellowmen by working with one's own hands. He was a great man, very learned very aristocratic, who lived in simplicity and poverty. His humility was not on the surface. He was regarded as a proud man, but his heart was truly humble.

Mar Baselius died on Jan 1, 379, about six years after Mar Athanasius had died.

VI

3. Mar Gregorius of Nazianzus (329-389)

Besides St. John who wrote the Gospel, only Mar Gregorius is given the title the “Theologian” by the Church. This may be because both St. John and St. Gregory Nazianzen have specially tried to show that the Logos, Christ, was truly God.

Mar Gregorius was one of the three Cappodocian Fathers, and a cousin and friend of the other two, namely Mar Baselius and Mar Gregorius of Nyssa. He was also a class-mate of St. Basil in Athens.

He was made a priest in 362, and ten years later was consecrated Bishop. For two years he was suffragan bishop to his father, the elder Gregorius. In 379 he went to Constantinople, the capital of the Empire, where the famous and large Church of St. Sophia was already in the hands of the Arians. He started in a small Church which belonged to the Orthodox party, and slowly by virtue of his character and preaching ability, drew the Christian crowds away from the Arian faith to the true Orthodox faith of the Church. During the great ecumenical synod of Constantinople (381) he was appointed Archbishop of that Imperial City, but retired from the Archbishopric within a few months. He went back to Nazianzus, and then to his own family estate, where he died at the age of 60.

St. Gregory was a great poet and a powerful orator. His sermons are ornate in style, but very balanced in theology, and full of biblical allusions. His five theological orations are a masterpiece. Along with St. Basil, he wrote the monastic rules for their community, and clarified the doctrine of the Trinity. He established on a sure foundation, along with St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa, the full Godhead of the son and the Holy Spirit. The faith of the Church about the Holy Trinity was formulated by the three Cappodocian Fathers.

St. Gregory was a shy, retiring, and sensitive soul, who ran away from all public praise. The towering figure of St. Basil dominated his life throughout, but St. Gregory was as profound and clear in his thinking as St. Basil.

There is a true story from his student days in Athens, about how St. Basil and St. Gregory became such good friends.

In those days too, young students were just as mischievously playful as they are today. And every new student had to undergo a severe test by his fellowstudents before being too long in school.

The students usually laid hold of a new boy, and took him to their home. He is then teased and questioned and harassed until some of them weep. The students threaten the new boy with all kinds of cruelties, and if he does not know that it is all a joke, he may get quite frightened. And then he was taken to the public bath, where he was further teased and jostled.

When Mar Baselius came to Athens as a first-year student, Mar Gregorios was already a senior student. Because Mar Baselius was already a famous student before he came to Athens, the others decided to give him a particularly rough treatment in order to curb his pride. But Gregorios knew that Basil was too dignified and sensitive to take such severe teasing, and so persuaded the students to exempt Baselius from the rough treatment. Basil is supposed to have been the only student who so escaped the pranks of his fellow students.

The fairness and goodness of young Gregory can be seen in another incident which involved Basil.

The students were than organized in regional groupings, and the Armenian students decided to debate publicly with Basil in order to bring down his pride. Gregory watched the debate, saw Basil was winning easily. Gregory took pity on the poor Armenian students and took their side in the debate. Basil was now loosing the debate,

and the Armenians began to rejoice. Finally Gregory saw that Basil's pride was well - broken, and then he joined Basil's side, so that ultimately Basil won the debate. From then on Basil and Gregory became bosom pals.

St. Gregory's brother, Caesarius was an outstanding doctor, who became chief physician to the Emperor Constantius when already quite young. Caesarius' character, manner and skill combined in an unusual way to produce a man destined for great success in the world. But Caesarius was a profound Christian, and Constantius' successor, the anti Christian Julian, tried to make him into a pagan. St. Gregory fought for his brother against the Emperor who was also his class-mate at Athens.

Finally Caesarius left the Imperial court and joined Mar Baselius and Mar Gregorios in their mountain monastery. It was the presence of Dr. Caesarius which made it easy for the monastery of Mar Baselius to build their first hospitals and look after the sick in the whole surrounding area.

* * * * *

But let us get back to Mar Gregorius. His father was one of the last married bishops of the Church. He himself was an unmarried bishop, like the other Cappodocians, and all the other fathers of whom we speak in this booklet.

One day his own parish people in Nazianzus took hold of him when he was a young man of about 29 and took him to his own father, asking that he be ordained as a priest. Gregory ran away in to Pontus, where his friend Basil was already building his mountain retreat.

Some months later he returned to his parish and found all parish people very angry with him. Some accused him of being afraid to accept the priesthood, because he feared the Emperor Julian. Others said he was a coward. Yet others said that he was ambitious, and he ran away because they did not directly make him a bishop.

In his sermon explaining why he ran away, he describes the great qualities necessary for a priest. His sermon became the basis for several later books by others on the priesthood and its high responsibility.

His greatest theological contribution lay at two points. On the one hand St. Gregory Nazianzen as well as St. Gregory of Nyssa held that God could not be understood by the human mind or by any other created mind including the angels.

He can only be apprehended from what He does. And from what we now see as His work in the world, we can see that He is three in One - the Holy Trinity. This was his other contribution. He is called *Theologos* or Theologian because he showed finally that the Logos, the Word of God, was fully Theos, i.e. God. He also was a great help to St. Basil in proving that the Holy Spirit was also fully God.

The incomprehensibility of God and the Trinity may thus be regarded as two doctrines to which Mar Gregorius gave final shape.

He taught also that the Eucharist was a true sacrifice of the body and blood of our Lord and that the Blessed Virgin Mary was the bearer of God - *Theotokos*.

He became Patriarch of Constantinople for a short period during the famous synod of Constantinople in 381. He resigned soon after, returned home to breathe his last there in 389.

VII

Mar Gregorius of Nyssa (C. 330 - C. 395)

Mar Gregorius was the younger brother of Mar Baselius, and just as learned as his brother, though he never had the advantage of travelling which St. Basil had. His health was very poor from childhood.

He was born around 330 A.D., perhaps in 335. From his youth he wanted to be a priest, but in fact he became a rhetorician - the ancient equivalent of a combined professor and politician.

Later he left his profession and entered the monastery of his brother Basil. Most of his education came from his grandmother, his eldest sister, the saintly and scholarly St. Makarina.

He became bishop of Nyssa around 371. This was the time when the heresy of Arius was very strong. Many of the bishops were followers of Arius. The Arian bishops opposed Mar Gregorius and deposed him from the episcopate in 376, with the consent of the Emperor Valens.

Valens died in 378. St. Gregory was brought back from exile. He was one of the main drafters at the second Ecumenical Synod (Constantinople 381). The Emperor declared the faith of St. Gregory as the standard by which to test the beliefs of other bishops.

In his later life, Mar Gregorius travelled widely as a preacher in great demand. His teaching had many fresh and original elements. The western Church generally finds St. Gregory's teaching opposed at many points to that of Augustine, especially in the matter of original sin. They have therefore not been very keen to make use of his writings, which are actually more faithful to the True Tradition of the Church than what Augustine taught. Augustine is not recognized as

a teacher of the faith by the Eastern Churches, while St. Gregory is recognized as such both by East and West.

Both Western and Eastern theology need to relearn the teachings of this profound theologian of the Church.

Augustine regards man as totally evil. Therefore without the grace of God, man can do nothing good, and even that which appears like virtue in pagans is only a “splendid vice.” Gregory on the other hand believes that Man is created in the image of God, and therefore potentially capable of all good. But he is now fallen in sin. In Christ God has become man so that the power of sin may be destroyed. Christ unites us with himself and fills us with his own power for good. He thus transforms us into the true image of God - to become partakers in the divine nature.

Man is a sinner, according to St. Gregory, but that is not his nature. His created nature is to be like God, capable of all good. He disagrees fundamentally with Augustine who of course did not know enough Greek to read his writings.

St. Gregory also teaches that the world is good, since it is created by God. Man is made to enjoy both the earthly beauty and the heavenly joy. Augustine teaches that the world (the city of the earth) is bad, and that Man should love only heaven, the city of God. St. Gregory had said that man is made to enjoy both earthly and heavenly goodness.

St. Gregory taught that man is made to rule the creation, and that his nature is a kingly nature. He can fully exercise this nature only in union with God. St. Gregory welcomed the knowledge, the science and technology of this world, as something good and necessary for man’s growth, whereas Augustine was more inclined to despise these things as mere folly before God.

Augustine was afraid of human freedom. St. Gregory taught that goodness without freedom was not virtue; that God was totally free,

and that man is also meant to be free in doing good. Augustine believed man to be completely moved by God alone in doing good. He had a very low estimate of human freedom. St. Gregory of Nyssa on the other hand wanted human freedom to develop to its full measure in order that he may really be the perfection of all good.

St. Gregory taught that only by a life of discipline and worship we can grow into God's goodness. He taught that by the sacraments we became totally united with God in Christ and were thus transformed. He taught that the Eucharist was the true body and blood of our Lord.

VIII

Mar Ivanios the Golden - Mouthed (St. John Chrysostom)

The Prince of Preachers, this brilliant father of Church was born in Antioch. His father was a high army officer in the Praetorian Guard, who died in his infancy. He had an excellent secular education under the great pagan teacher Libanius, who taught also St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzen as well as the Emperor Julian.

He wanted, mostly by the persuasion of St. Basil, when very young, to become a monk. But his mother, a widow, was sick, and he had to look after her. So he stayed at home and imposed a monastic rule upon himself.

In 374 his mother died. John was now free to be a monk. But the people of Antioch wanted to make him a bishop. But he escaped the pressure and lived as a monk of the very strict order of St. Pachomius. His health was sadly undermined by the rigour of his asceticism.

In 381, he was ordained deacon by Mar Meletios, and was attached to Bishop Flavian of Antioch. He became a very famous preacher during five years in the diaconate. The Antiocheans gave him the name Chrysostomos, which means ‘Golden-mouthed’ (the equivalent of English “silver-tongued”).

Antioch was a nominally Christian city-beautiful, with a straight and wide royal avenue traversing its four-mile length, with beautiful marble columns and golden statues on either side. But it was full of cruel, quarrelsome, slanderous, gossiping people, many of whom called themselves Christians.

St. John Chrysostom’s preaching for 12 years as a priest changed the moral values of the city. He preached mainly from the Bible. His homilies on the Bible have earned him a title as one of the greatest

Bible teachers of all history. He had a great capacity to discern deep spiritual meaning in the Bible and to apply it directly to the practical problems. The court, the clergy and the people had all become morally lazy, because their bishops had no great spiritual quality with which to inspire them. They were self-indulgent, luxury-loving, quarrelsome. As the bishops, so the people.

Mar Ivanios preached also against the economic and social evils of his city. He preached against vice and extortion, corruption and bribery, black-marketing and nepotism. He enjoined the virtues of humility, honesty, simplicity, love and service.

In 398 he was chosen by the Emperor Arcadius to become Patriarch of the Imperial City, Constantinople. Mar Theophilos, the Patriarch of Alexandria had hoped for this honour, but the Emperor insisted on Father Ivanios (Ioannes and Ivanios are Greek forms of John). Mar Theophilos consecrated Mar Ivanios, both with equal unwillingness, the former because he hated Mar Ivanios, and the latter because he disliked the honour of the Patriarchate.

In Constantinople he found the patriarchal palace very similar to the Imperial palace, full of luxury and corruption. He set himself to cleaning house first. He purged the bishop's house of all the corrupt priests, monks and laymen, and changed it from a palace into a monastery.

He then began attacking the corruption in the Government and the Imperial palace. He preached against the personal conduct of the pleasure-loving Empress and the Minister of the Emperor. They became his enemies. All the rich and self-indulgent people of Constantinople became infuriated by his preaching against corruption and injustice.

Mar Theophilos of Alexandria took advantage of all these enmities and convened the Synod of the Oak (403 A.D.) which excommunicated Mar Chrysostom on 29 charges, almost all of them false.

He was soon reinstated by the Emperor. But he continued to incur the displeasure of the Empress. He was again excommunicated, on the charge that he assumed charge of a see when he had been canonically excommunicated. He was exiled and persecuted, and when his health failed, was made to walk very long distances in severe weather, and died while walking, falling on the road, breathing his last in 407 and uttering the words “Glory be to the Lord of all for everything.”

Mar Ivanios was not a great theologian, but he was an outstanding preacher and bible teacher. He was a man of great personal holiness. He, along with Mar Athanasius, are the two most popular Eastern fathers among western people, probably because they are easier to understand than the other more profound fathers.

Theologically, his greatest teaching was on the Priesthood. We give below a few quotations:

“When you see the Lord sacrificed and lying before you, and the High Priest (bishop) standing over the sacrifice and praying, and all who partake being coloured with that precious blood, can you think that you are still among men and still standing on earth? Are you not at once transported to heaven and, having driven out of your soul every carnal thought, do you not with soul naked and mind pure look round upon heavenly things? Oh, the wonder of it! Oh the loving kindness of God to men! He who sits above with the Father is at that moment held in our hands, and gives himself to those who wish to clasp and embrace him - which they do, all of them, with their eyes ... Anyone who considers how much it means to be able, in his humanity, still entangled in flesh and blood, to approach that blessed and immaculate Being, will see clearly how

great is the honour which the grace of the spirit has bestowed on priests.”*

He also says clearly that the Priest has been given an authority higher than that given to the angels - that of forgiving sins, of binding and loosing something on earth and thereby binding and loosing in heaven.

* St. John Chrysostom, *Six Books on the Priesthood*. Tr. Graham Neville. London SPCK, 1964, pp. 70-71.

IX

Mar Kurilos of Alexandria

At the Synod of the Oak in 403, when Mar Ivanios Chrysostomos was excommunicated, Patriarch Mar Theophilos of Alexandria was accompanied by his nephew, Kurilos, who later became his successor as Patriarch of Alexandria.

We know very little about his early life. He was born in Alexandria around 378, and must have received an excellent classical education in the Christian academy in Alexandria. The clarity and precision of his mind are quite impressive. He has laid the foundation for our understanding of how the human and divine natures of Christ are united to form one single nature.

In 412, when Patriarch Mar Theophilos died, even though the Government tried to get their own man elected, the people chose Mar Kurilos. He was merciless in his opposition to Jews and heretics. The Government chief (Prefect) was opposed to his election, and became his great enemy. But the monks of the Egyptian desert were all on Mar Kurilos' side. And they were very powerful in their influence and capacity to use any means including violence to protect the Orthodox faith.

His biggest fight was with the Patriarch of Constantinople, however. That Patriarch was a heretic, none other than Nestorius.

We are just beginning to understand what Nestorians actually taught regarding the Person of Christ. The text-books say that Nestorius taught that Christ was two persons with two natures - a divine person and a human person. It is quite clear that Nestorius rejected the word *Theotokos* as applied to the Mother of our Lord. This word means "God bearer," and affirms that the child in the Blessed Virgin Mary's womb was God and man from the very conception - it was not the case that Mary conceived a human child who later became the bearer of God.

Nestorius attacked the word *Theotokos* and wanted to use only *Christo-tokos*, Christ-bearer. It was his attack of the word *Theotokos* rather than his belief in two persons that caused the Church to condemn him as a heretic. Perhaps Nestorius did not fully realize what he was teaching; and he was Patriarch of the imperial City of Constantinople. His rejection of the *Theotokos* formula implied a belief in two persons, though probably Nestorius never actually taught that Christ was two persons. He was afraid, however, that the *Theotokos* formula denied the human soul of Christ, and suspected, perhaps without full understanding, that those who hold to this formula believed that Christ was simply the logos and human flesh without a human soul - which was very near to the heresy of Apollinarius. Nestorius attributed such a heretical belief to Mar Kurilos of Alexandria. This was a complete misunderstanding. Mar Kurilos believed that the Word of God, the Logos, the second person of the Trinity, assumed unto himself a full human nature - body, soul and spirit.

Nestorius also taught that the Church was wrong in believing that it was the Second Person of the Trinity who suffered on the cross and tasted death in the flesh. He insisted that only the human nature died. Mar Kurilos insisted that the Logos was the subject of all the actions of Christ and therefore we cannot deny that the Logos experienced everything through the human soul in Christ.

Nestorius was not a clear thinker. He therefore denied all the sacred teaching of the Church which he could not understand. If he were just a private individual, his unclear teaching could have gone unnoticed. But as Patriarch of Constantinople, he had no right to deny the faith of the Church. Mar Kurilos therefore took the initiative to question Nestorius, and got his heresy condemned at the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.). St. Cyril's formula was

“God the Logos did not come into a man, but he truly became Man, while remaining God.”

Nestorius taught that the Logos “indwelt” the man Jesus. St. Cyril regarded this as too loose a relationship between God and Man in Christ. God did not simply dwell in Jesus as in a temple, but Jesus Christ was God become man without ceasing to be God. And therefore Christ has only one nature - “the one nature of the Word of God Incarnate,” which is both fully human and fully divine, but cannot be called two natures, because they have united to form one single divine - human nature of God-in-the-flesh, Jesus Christ.

Mar Kurilos knew the distinction between deity and humanity - it is clear that the former is Creator and the latter is creature. But in Christ Jesus the Creator has become the creature without ceasing to be the Creator. That is the miracle and the mystery of the Incarnation.

We are not “monophysites” when we thus follow the teaching of our father and father of the Universal Church Mar Kurilos. *Monos* means in Latin only. ‘Monophysite’ means believing in one nature only (presumably the divine nature). We believe in one united divine-human nature, not in one of the two natures only. We are neither diophysites nor monophysites, but “*mia-physites*” (*mia* in Greek means one). We do not deny the human nature of Christ, but believe that one Person has only one nature, and that Christ has one divine - human nature, the divine nature being His in eternity and the human nature by the Incarnation. We cannot believe, however that the two natures are separate or separable. They form one single nature. This is the teaching of Mar Kurilos, which may be summarised as follows:

- (a) The nature of Christ cannot be divided into two after the union by Incarnation.
- (b) The actions of Christ cannot be attributed to two different subjects - one divine and one human. It is one and the same Christ who performs miracles and also hungers and thirsts.

(c) The Word of God is hypostatically united to the humanity, which was assumed, and the two operate together, the Word being always the subject.

The controversy between Nestorius and Mar Kurilos was settled finally at the Council of Ephesus in 431 when the teaching of Nestorius was condemned, and he was “dispossessed of all dignity in the Church.”

St. Cyril is the touchstone of Christology for East and West, for those who believe in two natures and those who believe in one united divine - human nature.

St. Cyril died in 444.



Part 2

1

What do the Orthodox Believe

What do we believe? It is more important to ask: “in whom do we put our trust?” “Believe” is a very vague word. Often it means simply holding an opinion without demonstrable evidence. But our faith is not an opinion, not one of many possible views. It is an affirmation of what ultimate reality is - dependable, trustable reality.

We do not put our trust either in the ancient character of our Church or in any dogmas or doctrines. Our trust is in the One True God-Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eternal, self-existent, indivisible, infinite, incomprehensible, glorious, holy, not created or owing his being to something else, all-sovereign, Creator of the whole universe. All things are from Him. We too have our being from Him, acknowledge him as the source of our being. Of the being of all else, of all good and therefore worthy of adoration and praise perpetual.

About the First Person of the Trinity, the Father we know only what the Son and the Spirit have revealed to us, and still continue to reveal. The knowledge of God that matters is not conceptual knowledge or statable doctrine, but true worship in the community of Faith. True knowledge of God comes through the quality of our life than through intellectual clarification. Some things, however we can affirm conceptually, knowing well that these concepts do not fully conform to reality.

The Truine God is beyond all conceptual comprehension not only by human beings, but by any created mind. He is, in a way different from the way anything else in creation is. We know the Truine God, not because we have comprehended His being or is-ness, but through His operations or activities, the energies of God which come down to us through the Incarnate Son and through the Holy Spirit. The Truine God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, share the same is-ness;

their being is one-infinite, eternal, uncreated, self-existent, with three persons or centres of consciousness and response, always acting in concord and unison as one being. There is no gap or interval of time or space between the three persons; there is no senior or junior; greater or lesser.

We believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God became a human being, rules in the universe. All power in heaven (the aspects of the universe now not open to our senses) and on earth (that is, the universe in all-its tangible, sensible aspects) is given to Jesus Christ the God-Man. Death and Evil have been overcome, but they are still allowed to function, serving Christ's purposes. They will disappear - love and life will triumph - this is the faith of the Church, and this we affirm.

For us the Holy Spirit is Life-giver, Sanctifier and perfecter. We do think in terms of sin and grace, but the central category in our understanding of salvation is the life-giving Spirit. It is He who effects forgiveness of sins, removes barriers between human beings as well as between them and God, gives life, makes people more holy and God-like, and draws us to perfection. He works in the Church, through His special gifts, to build up the body of Christ and to make its members holy. He also works in the Creation, bringing all things to their fullness and perfection.

While we do speak about these operations of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are not three Gods, but one God, we know next to nothing about His being as True God, It is important for us to confess the incomprehensibility of God. He is not to be discussed or explained, but to be worshipped and adored and acknowledged as Lord of all.

We believe in the Church, all who acknowledge the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed do. The Church is the great consequence of the Son of God becoming flesh. It is this community that not only bears witness to Christ, but also is the abode of Christ, Christ dwelling

in the Church, which is His body. It is in the Church that the life-giving power of the Spirit is at work.

But the Church is not simply the community believers gathered together. It is a reality which spans heaven and earth, the risen Christ himself as chief cornerstone, the Apostles and Prophets as foundation, and all who belong to Christ from Adam to second coming being members of this one, holy Catholic apostolic community.

The local Church is not a mere part of this one great heaven-and-earth community; it is the full manifestation of the One Church, especially when the community is gathered together with the Bishop for the hearing of the Word of God and for the Eucharistic participation in the one eternal sacrifice of Christ of the Cross.

We are never allowed to forget even in a small local church the presence of this great cloud of witnesses who share with us the life of the One Church. We remember at every Eucharist the departed as a whole, and especially the Apostles, great teachers, and spiritual leaders who have helped build up and protect the Church from error and deviation. It is not a law that we have to ask the Saints to intercede for us. We do it with great joy and genuine appreciation of their past and present role in the one Church of Jesus Christ.

Of the great Saints in the Church, the first (after Christ) and unique place goes to the Blessed Virgin Mary, for she was the first to hear the Gospel of the Incarnation of our Lord from the Archangel, and to receive Him, on behalf of all of us human beings, into her womb. She is the mother of Christ, and thus mother of all the faithful who are joint-heirs with Christ. But she is also the Theotokos, the Godbearer, for the one whom she bore in her womb was truly God himself.

For her, Jesus Christ was not an ordinary human being who was then adopted or exalted as Son by God the Father. No, He is the Second person of the Trinity, who dwelt in the womb of Mary without being absent from the “place” of His eternal being. Jesus Christ is

now fully God as he always was, of the same being as God the Father. He is also fully a human being, sharing our fallen human nature, but without incurring sin. His humanness and his Godness are inseparably and indivisibly united without change or mixture. One divine-human Christ, one Person, with one united nature and faculties which combine the divine and the human. Our union with this divine-human nature of Christ is what makes us participate in the divine nature (2 Pet. 2:4; Hebrews 2:10-14) without ceasing to be human beings.

Salvation for us means more than escaping hell and going to heaven. It means separation from evil and growth in the good. It means eternal life with true holiness and righteousness. It means also being united with Christ in his divine-human nature, in his sonship and rule over the universe. It means becoming more and more God-like in love, power and wisdom. This is what the Holy spirit makes possible. What is humanly impossible becomes reality by the grace and power of God.

The participation in Christ's body and His being and nature becomes possible, by the grace of God, by the Holy Spirit, through the "mysteries of the Church" (*roze-d-idtho* in Syriac), which are called Sacraments in the West. These mysteries, mainly Baptism - Chrismation - Eucharist, are acts in the community of Faith by which the eternal and eschatological (i.e. pertaining to the last times) reality of our oneness with Christ becomes experienced by faith in the Church, in time, here and now.

There are other mysteries also - Confession - Absolution for forgiveness of sins for the baptized, an anointing of the Sick for deliverance from Sin and Sickness. Marriage too is a mystery of the Church, because it unites Man and Woman in an act of permanent mutual commitment and permanent union, reflecting the Union of Christ with His Bride, the Church, or of God with the new Humanity.

Another great mystery of the Church is *hierotonia* (or

hierothesia) the special laying of hands for receiving special gifts of the Holy Spirit - for the Bishop as the mystery - presence of Christ the High Priest and Good Shepherd with His Church, and the related ministries of ruling elders (priests or presbyters) and serving ministers (deacons and deaconesses).

We hold the Bible in very high regard. The Gospel is the Word of Life, the proclamation of life and salvation to the world. We hold the Scriptures in the highest respect, and no other writings can have the same standing, for the primary witness to Christ is in the Scriptures. We revere the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, and all our prayers, as well as the services of the mysteries of the Church are saturated with Biblical reference, and always completed by the public reading of the Scriptures.

Icons are important for us. These mediate to the worshipping community the presence of the Saints, and of the saving events of our Lord's incarnate life. We do not make images of the unseen God. We consecrate icons to mediate to us the Godbearing persons and events which have been actually manifested to our senses.

For us Tradition is not something old, static, and life-less; it is the life of the Church as a counting body, with the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit in it. It is the Spirit that makes the Tradition alive and it bears witness to Christ; it also moves forward in expectation of the final fulfillment. Hence Tradition for us is dynamic. It includes knowledge of Christ, the teaching of the Apostles, the doctrine of the Saints and fathers, the practices of worship developed by the community of faith, its way of doing things and practicing love. Scripture is part of this tradition. Tradition is not just a body of knowledge, but a way of life and worship and service.

Our worship as a community is the centre of our life, not our own personal articulations of faith. It is there that the Church, united with Christ, participates in Christ's self-offering for the world. Our daily life flows out from worship and has to be a life of love and

compassion, caring for the needy, struggling against evil, serving the poor.

Our hope is focused on Christ's coming again. It is only in that coming that evil would be separated from good, death from life, so that the good can triumph eternally and grow eternally also. In that coming there will be a reconstitution of the universe; all things shall be made new; evil shall be banished. Death and darkness would be finally overcome; light and life and love will triumph.

It is our task to bear witness to this final reality, while living it out here and now, as much as we can, beset as we are by sin and frailty.

Thy Kingdom Come Lord. And when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom, remember us poor sinners also!

(1976)

2

Introducing the Eastern Churches

Most Indians have not even heard about an Eastern form of Christianity. They know mainly the two Western forms: Protestant and Roman Catholic. The average educated Indian, if he is wellread, knows the different forms and names of Protestantism: Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Congregational, Church of South India, Church of North India and so on. And he knows that all these forms of Christianity have come from Europe, along with the colonialist - imperialist movements of the 15th century and afterwards.

But he has seldom heard about an eastern Christian Church. Nor has he most likely encountered one in India. It comes to him as a surprise therefore to learn that, as Nehru once said, Christianity is older in India than in most parts of Europe. It is a fact that the Christian Church has existed in India ever since the first century. When one of the original Twelve Apostles of Christ, St. Thomas came to India (in 52 A.D.) and established Churches here.

This ancient Eastern Church continues to this day in India, though the coming of the Western missionaries has nearly destroyed this ancient church and broken it up into several factions.

What is left in the old Eastern Christian tradition in India is the Orthodox Church, sometimes called the Syrian Orthodox Church, because Syriac was once the language of worship of this Church. It is rather small, just 15 lakhs of members, which is only 10% of the total number of Christians in this country.

Their significance should not be evaluated in terms of size alone. They are cultured, fully Indian, and have produced outstanding leaders, like the deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, Mr. C. M. Stephen, and the Foreign Trade Commissioner, Dr. P. C.

Alexander, Mr. A. M. Thomas, Chairman of the National Khadi Board and many such national leaders.

In what way are they different from the western Churches? There are some easily recognizable external differences. Their priests usually are bearded and wear a black cap. Their Bishops can be recognized by a special head-dress with one large cross (for Christ) and 12 smaller crosses (for the 12 apostles) embroidered on it. Their worship is more colourful than that of the Western Churches.

In administrative structure, the Indian Church is not subordinate to or dependent upon any Church or group outside India. They have their own supreme Head in India - His Holiness The Catholicos, who resides in Kottayam, Kerala. The Indian Church is divided into dioceses, and there is an Indian Bishop or Metropolitan in charge of each diocese. The Metropolitans, along with the Catholicos constitute the Holy Synod, which is the supreme administrative body of the Church.

The differences in faith are more difficult to explain to the outsider. The main difference between Roman Catholics and the Orthodox is that the latter do not acknowledge the authority of the Roman Pope. Roman Catholics priests are unmarried, Orthodox church priests can be married, unless they are monks (Orthodox bishops are always unmarried). The Roman Catholic Church follows the ways of thinking of certain Western thinkers like Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Ignatius Loyola etc. The Eastern Orthodox do not accept these teachers. They follow the teachings of the ancient Fathers (gurus) who lived before the Church was divided in the 5th century. Some of their teachers are St. Basil, St. Athanasius, St. Cyril, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Severus etc. The differences between these two groups of teachers are subtle but significant. There are very difficult points like whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone or from the Father and Son; these are not easily comprehensible except for the trained theologian. On matters

like sacraments, grace, sin, Holy Spirit also there are some significant differences of opinion between Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox.

With the Protestants, the differences are even greater. The Orthodox, do not believe that the Bible is the only authority for the Christian teaching. The whole tradition of the Church, which not only includes the Bible, but also the teachings of the ancient Fathers and the decisions of the Councils, is authoritative for them. They do not believe, as some Protestants do, that the Church is composed of the believers coming together. They believe that the Church is one in all ages and all places, and that all those who have ever believed in Christ (even those who lived before Christ) are even now members of the Church, and that the Christians now living form only a small part of the Church. The Orthodox do not regard the bishop, or his representative the priest, as merely someone commissioned to preach the word and administer the sacraments. The bishop or priest is a visible manifestation of Christ Himself and they revere Him accordingly. The Orthodox also give greater importance to the sacraments like Baptism, the Holy Anointing, Confession, Eucharist (Mass), Ordination of priests, the Sacrament of matrimony etc. Protestants have fewer sacraments (mainly Baptism and Lord's Supper) and do not give the same importance to these as the Orthodox do.

The forms of worship of the Orthodox are entirely Eastern, brought from Palestine and Syria, and indigenized in India through centuries of use. The Protestants and Roman Catholics are still trying to emancipate themselves from their recently imported Western heritage.

The main tenant of the Orthodox faith is the belief that salvation is by being united with Christ who is Isvara incarnate. By being united with Him, we are to grow into God's image by becoming more and more god-like in character, in love, in goodness and in

wisdom. This process of transformation is called theosis or divinisation. This is very close to certain schools of Hindu thinking about salvation by yoga or union with Brahma.

The Orthodox Church in India lives at peace with followers of other religions like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsees, Jains, Buddhists etc. They are not aggressive in trying to convert the others, but are prepared to live with them in peace and concord, and with respect. For this reason they are often accused by more aggressive Protestant and Catholics, of being defective or lacking in missionary Zeal.

The Orthodox place greater emphasis on the quality of spiritual life, on worshipping God in a fitting way, and in showing love and compassion to all, rather than on evangelism or social activism. They run schools and hospitals, orphanages and homes for the destitute, but not for the sake of attracting converts. It is a silent labour of service in humility, which is its own reward.

(1976)

3

What is Prayer? Why Pray? How Pray?

1. What is Prayer?

Prayer is like breathing. Without breathing we cannot live. When we breathe, air enters our lungs, cleanses the blood in our veins by relieving it of the carbon dioxide, and supplying it with oxygen. If I do not breathe for a few minutes I die. When I have hard physical work to do, I need more air than when I am sleeping or sitting in a chair.

Fortunately God has so ordained that we do not die spiritually just because we have failed to pray for sometime. But where there is no prayer sin accumulates and the proper functioning of the spiritual life becomes obstructed. And if you have important spiritual work to do you need more prayer than otherwise. Only those who pray constantly are exercising their spiritual muscles.

Prayer is communion or communication with God - opening ourselves to Him and receiving His love. It is by living consciously in this relationship of love that we can be transformed into the image of God. By prayer we become more like God, more loving, more wise, more powerful, more kind and good.

In prayer we are cleansed of the accumulated impurities of our life and we are supplied with power to live a good, kind and holy life.

Prayer is not a matter of asking God for all kinds of things. Some teen-agers speak to their earthly father only when they need money. We should not become like them in relation to our heavenly Father - going to Him only when we need something. The relationship is valuable in itself, as in all true love. It is not what we get out of it that matters, but the fact that we are in communion with our loving Heavenly Father.

2. Why Pray?

Does not God know what we need, even before we ask him? Why does He want us to ask? Does prayer change God's will in any way? Can my prayer change the future that God has already determined?

These are legitimate questions that need to be answered. The Bible says clearly 'your Father knows what you need before you ask Him' (St. Mathew 6:8). But God wants that we know what is good for others as well as for ourselves. God wants that our will should not incline towards evil, but desire the good with deep yearning. Prayer is therefore a way of training the will to desire the good, as well as of turning our wills towards the highest concentration of all good, namely God.

Prayer is thus a way of becoming good by using our freedom to turn towards the good and to will the good. By prayer we become like God. God is good and wills the good. We should also become like God in willing and desiring what is good. By communion with God we also learn to desire the good which God also desires.

God said: 'Let there be light' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good (Gen. 1:3-4). What God willed became reality. We are to become like God. So we must also acquire the capacity to will the good, and it will happen as we desire, when we become more and more like God. Prayer is an expression of our will in desiring the good and realising it. When we are delivered from selfishness, pride, and evil desires, our prayers will become more like the creative Word of God, which merely by saying 'let there be light' can create light.

God has made us partakers of His own divine nature. He has called us to share in God's own glory and excellence (2 Pet. 1:4). When we trust in God and live a life of discipline, prayer, worship, virtue, knowledge, godliness, brotherly affection and love (2 Pet. 1:5-8), we are transformed into God's likeness and share in His

divine power. God wants us to have a part in the task of shaping this world through prayer and knowledge and work.

By prayer we do change reality. God has given us that power. But this power is not available to us until we become more godlike. That is why the prayers of the saints are more effective than our own prayer - because they are more god like than we are. If the power to change the world by our will is in the hands of evil men, they will make the world evil. We have to grow in the capacity for prayer by developing the habits of prayer and loving service.

And our prayers should not be selfish. In prayer the first focus is God. The second focus is other people. Only in the third place should we ask things for ourselves. In the Lord's Prayer all the first petitions are focused on God - His name, His kingdom, His will. This is the way our prayer should also be. We pray that God's purposes may be established in the lives of all people, that evil may be banished from the earth, that all men may live together in peace and justice, praising God the centre and source of all good. Even in the prayers that ask for daily food, for forgiveness and for protection from evil, the first person singular (I, me) is not used in the Lord's Prayer. We ask things for us, for all men.

When we all pray with love and faith, without selfishness or pride, our prayer changes things. God has more laws than the laws of physical science. He can make prayer achieve 'miracles' of healing and transformation which cannot be explained by medical science. Our science knows only some of God's laws. Prayer is also subject to certain laws. It is the same power of God which operates in the scientific realm, and in the realm of prayer.

In prayer, we are never alone. Not even alone with God. Especially in group prayer, we commemorate all those who are members of the Body of Christ, for it is as a member of the Body that we pray, and the other members are always with us. This is why we commemorate the Prophets, Apostles, the Blessed Virgin Mary,

the Martyrs, the Saints, the great Teachers and all the faithful departed and all the faithful living.

3. How Pray?

Prayer has to be learned. It is like swimming. When you are first thrown into the water, you may sink. You then may think that the law of gravity is final and cannot be changed. But there are other laws, like those of buoyancy and motion. The mere knowledge of these laws cannot teach you to swim. One jumps in and slowly, by repeated practice, acquires the skills of remaining afloat and of moving on the surface of or under the water. And some people are more skillful swimmers than others, because they have learned the rules and acquired the skills by constant practice.

The first rule in prayer as in swimming, is *not to give up just because you do not succeed in the first three or four attempts*. Prayer is a spiritual skill to be acquired by constant practice.

The second rule, again as in swimming is to *'let go'*, to let the water support you, to be unanxious and relaxed. In prayer also we have to let ourselves go, relax, trust in God to support you and teach you how to pray.

The third rule is to *keep up the practice, even if you do not feel like it, or enjoy it*. In the life of prayer, our inherent love of sensual pleasures and our selfish love of laziness and comfort, will interfere to make us reluctant to keep up the practice, finding various excuses for not praying. There is no use saying 'I don't feel like praying' or 'I do not get anything from it.' It will take years before you get the habit of prayer and really begin to enjoy it. One must strengthen the will to have control over the laziness of the body and the desires of the flesh if one is to make progress in the art and skill of prayer. There is nothing like regular practice which can teach you to pray.

A fourth rule, closely connected with the third, is: *develop the*

discipline of prayer through fasting and self-control. Man does not become free and good like God until he learns to control his own inner drives and passions. Restraint of hunger and thirst, of anger and jealousy, of sexual passion, of the desire for glory and flattery, of the desire for bodily excitement and for sensual stimulation, and of all inner turbulences which make us do things against our own free will, is a necessary preparation for prayer. As good athletes competing for the Olympic Games go through very rigorous self discipline in order to keep their body, muscles and nerves in good condition, so should the man of prayer keep his body, mind and spirit in good condition and under conscious control.

A fifth rule is to *use our whole body and even material things in the service of prayer.* Prayer is an act of the whole man, body, soul and spirit - not simply an act of the mind. The body can participate in prayer through posture, speech, and acts:

(a) Posture - In our Eastern tradition, the posture for prayer is standing, facing east, with arms uplifted or folded in adoration and worship.

(b) Focus - It is good to have a focal point outside - a cross with two candles on each side, icons or pictures of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mother and of the Saints, or even a more elaborate prayer-altar fixed in some part of the house, where the whole family assembles for prayer. Crucifixes, i.e. crosses with the representation of the crucified body of Christ on it, belong to the Western tradition and are not to be encouraged in our tradition. In choosing pictures, it is best to use eastern icons. Pictures with the sacred heart of Christ or of the Virgin Mother are to be avoided, because these belong to a particular period in Latin piety and are not helpful for a balanced spirituality.

(c) Lips and Mouth - The body must pray - not merely the mind. Let your lips and mouth sing the praises of God, even if your mind does not always follow. The act of the lips and mouth is also

your act of prayer, even without the concentration. Singing is better than saying your prayers, for in the very music certain human attitudes and aspirations are expressed.

(d) Wandering of the mind - Do not get anxious about the wandering of your mind. When you become aware that your mind is wandering, bring it back by consciously offering your wandering mind also to God. It is part of our confession about ourselves. "This is what I am Lord, distracted and unable to concentrate. I offer myself to Thee as I am. Take my wandering and distracted mind, and heal it by Thy grace." God will forgive you and transform you gradually.

(e) Gestures - Use the gestures of prostration, bowing the head, making the sign of the cross, and giving the kiss of peace. Words are not the only means of expression we have. Folding the hands and bowing is a sign of adoration, and of waiting for a blessing. Lifting up your hands with palms open, can mean petition, penitence, and intercession. Prostration is like *Sashtangapranama*, the sign of complete surrender and submission, placing yourselves in the hands of God with full trust. Making the sign of the cross is a way of reminding ourselves that we have been saved by the Cross of Christ, in fact crucified with Christ. Keep your three fingers together (thumb, index and middle fingers) to touch the forehead (symbolizing the Trinity, the source of all life and all good) and make a descending motion to the lower side of your chest to signify the descent of the Son of God from heaven to earth for our salvation, then take your fingers from your left arm to your right arm signifying both the horizontal arm of the cross, and the fact that we who were on the left as children of darkness, have now been brought to the right side of God as children of light. Giving the kiss of peace is the symbol of mutual forgiveness and love, and it is a time for us to overcome all feelings of bitterness or anger against members of the family or others outside.

All these signs are part of a language which goes much deeper than words and transforms our sub-conscious minds which words can seldom reach.

A sixth rule is to *keep the balance between group prayer and personal prayer*. Man is not primarily an individual. It is as a member of the Body of Christ that he has any standing before God. Therefore it is important for us to come into the presence of God regularly as a community - as a family, as a youth group, as a local congregation. And a community is composed of all kinds of people, not all of them exactly like you. They have different tastes, different ways of praying, different habits of prayer. I have to join them even sometimes when I think that their way of worship is not what it should be. Without participating in community worship and making the necessary adjustments necessary for joining them, we cannot get rid of our selfishness and pride, and grow to be a real human being.

But community worship is not enough by itself. We need various levels of community with varying degrees of intensity of relationship. The youth group and the family are more intimate communities than the congregation. New forms can be used in these smaller groups which will be difficult or unfamiliar for the congregation as a whole.

In addition to these forms, however, some other forms of prayer should be mastered for personal use. The most effective and useful of these forms is called ejaculatory prayer. These are one - sentence prayers which one can repeat as many times as necessary, no matter, where or when. You can say them in your mind when you are waiting for a bus; when you are anxious about something; when you are facing temptation, when you feel bored and lonely, while you are lying in bed, comfortable and too lazy to get up; while going to bed and when sleep does not come immediately, and so on.

The following are some of the possible forms of ejaculatory prayer:

1. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, be merciful to me a sinner.
2. O God, Thou art my God. I love Thee. I am Thine for ever.

3. Lord, you are my Master and Lord, I give myself to Thee.
4. Lord, keep me in Thy ways, keep me from all evil.
5. Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy, Lord have mercy upon me.

You can make up your own forms of prayer, for here the Church lays down no rules for personal prayers. Of these forms above, the first was a favourite with the monks, and is known as the ‘Jesus Prayer.’ They used to recite it thousands of times in a day as a sort of *Mantra*. In Mount Athos, the monks trained themselves to say this prayer along with every breath. They would say “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God” with every inhaling breath, hold the breath in the lungs for a few seconds and then exhale, saying “be merciful to me a sinner.” The idea was that the prayer should become as incessant an action as breathing, that the Lord Jesus Christ should become established in your heart as a deity is in a temple, and that you should constantly be in an attitude of prayer and repentance.

These forms of personal prayer as well as others should be developed. Each child of God has a right to speak to God any time and at all times, using his or her own words. There are no Church rules for personal prayer. It is an act of your personal freedom, and therefore is all the more pleasing to God when you use your own personal intimate language. Personal prayer enriches group prayer; common prayer in the family, group or congregation enriches one’s personal prayer; neither should be neglected. The two should balance each other. But the use of extemporary prayer is not to be encouraged in group worship.

A seventh rule is that *prayer should be nourished by the reading of the scriptures and meditation*. One can discipline oneself to read a chapter of scripture every day.

Read aloud or silently. Meditate on the meaning of the passage. Devotional books may be helpful, but may also obscure the meaning of the scripture. Do not worry about whether the reading of scriptures

gives you a feeling of devotion or not. Feelings are deceptive. What you need to find out is the answer to the following questions: “What was God saying to the people of that time through this passage? What does God say to me now?”

Systematic reading of the scriptures and memorizing some passages which touch you deeply will be found very helpful as life advances. You will be grateful to God in your middle age that you started reading and memorizing when your mind was still impressionable.

Conclusion

All these rules are to help you to become a praying Christian. Only your own sustained and disciplined practice will make you perfect. But remember one thing. Prayer can never be isolated from the common worship of the Eucharist and from the continuous, active compassionate love for your fellowmen. Let us all pray: “Lord, Teach us to pray. Amen.”

(Written for Orthodox young people in India, 1970’s)

Why pray for the dead?

Why ask the departed saints to pray for us?

(The imaginary dialogue between the five intelligent young people in our Church.)

Paul: The Bible says quite clearly: “There is only one mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5). Why do we then ask the Saints to mediate for us? I don’t understand.

Thomas: It is true that many people pray more to St. Mary or St. Gregorios than to Christ. What do you think, John? Can you answer Paul’s question?

John: I am not sure that I can. I would like to ask Paul a question. Does he ever ask anybody at all to pray for him?

Mary: I do ask people to pray for me when I am in trouble, or when someone dear to me is sick, or when I need something very badly from God.

Martha: How come? Why can’t you pray for yourself?

Mary: I guess I am a very sinful person, and I am not sure that God will always hear my prayer. So I ask somebody who is more religious or pious, like some friends I have, or our Achen to pray for us.

Thomas: Does that mean that you don’t pray for yourself, or do you ask somebody in addition to your praying for yourself?

Mary: Of course, I do pray for myself, but my prayers are rather weak. So I need the help of someone who will also pray for me.

Martha: Paul has not answered John’s question? Does Paul ask other people to pray for him?

Paul: I see no problem in somebody living praying for me. But how can I be sure that St. Mary or St. Gregorios will hear my request?

John: Oh, so it is only a question whether the Saints are able to hear our requests. If they can hear our requests you see no objection to our asking them to intercede for us?

Paul: I still think that Jesus Christ is the only true mediator between us and God, and that it is taking away from Christ's role as Sole Mediator to ask the departed Saints to pray for us.

Thomas: Paul, I see an inconsistency in your thought. You say it is all right to ask a living Christian to pray for us; but not a departed believer. Well, by asking a living Christian to intercede for you, are you not making that Christian friend, another Mediator, taking away from the sole mediatorship of Christ?

Paul: Yes, but I can see living people praying for each other. In fact the Bible says "Pray for one another" (James 5:16). So that I can see. But why pray to those who are already dead.

Thomas: Paul, would you make clear what your objection is. I don't understand. You say that if you ask a living person to pray for you, you are not violating the sole mediatorship of Christ. Do you think only when you ask a departed saint to pray for you, you violate that sole mediatorship principle?

Paul: I am not sure. I see your point. Somehow I have a prejudice against praying to the Saints. It seems to be almost like idolatry. But where does the Bible say that we should pray to the departed saints?

Mary: There I cannot agree with you Paul. Do you think we should do only those things which the Bible tells us to do? Where does the Bible say that we should turn to the East for prayer, or that we should make the sign of the Cross, or that we should run hospitals and schools, or even that we should build churches? The Bible is not a law-book which tells us all the things which we should do as Christians.

Martha: Well, then, how do we know what we should do or should not do as Christian?

John: Christians have freedom - within the Tradition. That is to say, Christians do not live by law, but the Tradition of the Church serves as a basic guideline, within which they have freedom to decide what is good in each situation. In the cases of both intercession through the Saints and prayer for the departed, the Tradition of the Church, of which the Bible is the earliest witness, offers a reliable orientation. But the Bible does not witness to the whole of the Christian Tradition. It shows us the earliest strata of the Tradition of the Church. The Tradition is always growing and we should know it in its dynamic continuity.

Martha: That is a lot of heavy theology which I don't fully understand, John. But tell me, did the early Church practice either of the two - prayer for the departed or asking for the intercession of the Saints? What is the evidence?

John: One of the earliest documents we have is the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (Asia Minor), was a great leader of the post-Apostolic Church. Baptized as an infant, he died as a martyr at the age of 86, being burnt to death around 155 A. D. The story of his martyrdom was written immediately afterwards and is a classic of the Christian Tradition. In this document, the people of Smyrna, who are the authors, say

“The Centurion ... put him (St. Polycarp) in the midst, and as their custom is, burned him. So we afterwards took-up his bones, more valuable than precious stones, and finer than fine gold, and laid them where it was fitting. There the Lord will permit us, as shall be possible to us, to assemble ourselves together in joy and gladness, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom” (para XVIII).

Thomas: So, that shows only that the relics of martyrs were treasured by the Church, and that the anniversaries of their martyrdom were celebrated by the Church with joy and gladness.

But does it say anything about praying for the dead or asking for the intercession of departed Saints?

John: Yes, you are right. All that we know from this passage is that

a) the relics of the martyrs were respected and treasured by the Church from the beginning;

b) that their day of martyrdom was celebrated by the Church with great joy and gladness; and

c) that the martyrs were regarded as having been “born” on the day of their martyrdom into a life of joy and gladness with the Lord.

Thomas: Is there any other evidence from the early centuries?

John: Of course there is plenty of other evidence. Let us begin with the New Testament. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks about the cloud of witnesses by whom we are always surrounded (12:1). These are the holy people of the Old and New Testament, who always share with us life in the Body of Christ. Praying for each other is an essential aspect of life in the Body of Christ; they pray for us and we should pray for them.

Martha: Tell us more arguments from the Bible.

John: Well, look at the same Hebrews passage: The writer says to the Hebrews Christians, that they are no longer standing before Mount Sinai, with its blazing fire and tempest and thunder and lightning that accompanied the receiving of the law; but

“You have come to Mount Zion and to the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a ruler who is God of all, and to the spirits just men made perfect, and to Jesus” (12:22-24).

This is where the Church lives and worships – in the company of the first-born whose names are inscribed in heaven and the “spirits

of righteous human beings made perfect.” Our Orthodox Church never thinks of itself without becoming aware of the “cloud of witnesses” who surround us all the time in the Body of Christ.

Thomas: I begin to see the point that Jesus, the Sole Mediator, is never without his body, the Church in heaven and on earth. I now understand better what Hebrews also says: i.e. “The one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all one” (Or, “one one” – Heb. 2:11). So neither we nor the departed saints can intercede for each other except as part of Christ’s own intercession, for he is always, perpetually, praying for us (Heb. 7:25), and as part of the Holy Spirit’s perpetual intercession (Rom. 8:27).

Mary: I also can see that (a) both the living and the departed are in Christ, as members of His body (b) that we should all pray for each other, i.e. we the living should pray for both the living and the departed, and that they the departed, should also pray for the living and the departed.

Paul: What I don’t understand is (a) whether the departed saints can actually hear our prayers and (b) what good our prayers can do for a person after he or she has died.

John: The second question was specifically raised in the Church in the 4th century and St. Cyril of Jerusalem gives a clear reply, in his catechetical lectures on the Holy Eucharist (Lecture xxiii: 9-10). I have the text here:

“Then we commemorate all these who have fallen asleep before us, first Patriarchs (of the Old Testament), prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that by their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petition. Then on behalf of the Holy Fathers and Bishops who have fallen asleep before us, and in a word, of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to the souls for whom the supplication is put up, while that holy and most awesome sacrifice is set forth.

“And I wish to persuade you by an illustration. For I know that many say, what is a soul profited, which departs from this world either with sins, or without sins, if it be commemorated in the prayer? For if a king were to banish certain persons who had offended against him, and then their people should weave a crown and offer it to him as behalf of those punishment, would he not grant a remission of their penalties? In the same way, we when we offer to Him our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, though they be sinners, weave no crown, but offer up Christ himself as the Sacrifice for our sins, propitiating our merciful God for them as well as for ourselves.”

Martha: That is a peculiar illustration. Who was this St. Cyril? When did he live?

John: He was Bishop of Jerusalem from about 340 to 386; a strong fighter against the Arian heresy in the period after the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.). These 24 catechetical lectures were given in or around Lent, 347 AD in the great Cathedral of Jerusalem, and form the most complete corpus we have of the teaching of the Church in the 4th century.

Mary: That is interesting. Then it was not just the medieval Roman Catholic Church that began the cult of the Saints and prayer for the departed. Do any other Eastern Fathers testify to such a practice at that time?

John: The interesting thing is that this is not St. Cyril’s personal view that we have in the catechetical lectures. He is commenting on the prayers used in the Qurbana in Jerusalem at that time. And all scholars know that the Jerusalem Qurbana retained the original form established by the Apostles themselves. Everywhere in the churches of that time in the Holy Qurbana the saints were commemorated and asked to intercede for us, and we remembered also the departed faithful.

Paul: All right I am beginning to see. But tell us, who else among the Fathers write about this?

John: I cannot give you an exhaustive list. But I have some notes here, from which I shall read:

1. St. John Chrysostem (ca. 347-407): “Not in vain was this tute ordained by the Apostles, that in the awesome Mysteries (i.e. Holy Qurbana) remembrance should be made of the departed for they knew that is a great gain to them and a great benefit” (*Commentary on I Corinthians*, Hom. 41, p. 457 a).

2. St. Basil (ca. 330-379) enumerates the many favours (largely temporal blessings) granted by St. Mamas to those who pray to him (Sermon on St. Mamas para 26).

3. St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-389) – prays for his younger brother Caesarius who died in 369 A.D.:

“O Lord of life and death... do thou now receive Caesarius, the first fruits of our pilgrimage” (N.P.N.F. series Two Vol: VII, p. 238).

St. Gregory also prays to St. Athanasius, who died in 373 AD in the following words:

“And mayest thou cat upon us from above a propitions glance, and conduct this people in its perfect worship of the perfect Trinity, which as Father, Son, Holy Ghost, we contemplate and adore. And mayest thou, if my lot be peaceful, possess and aid me in my pastoral charge, or if it pass through struggles, uphold me, or take me to thee, and set me with thyself and those like thee, in Christ Himself, our Lord, to whom be all glory, honour and power for evermore” (NPNF Vol: VII, p. 280).

4. St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330 - ca. 395) makes the following supplication to the Martyr St. Theodore, on his feast day. “O thou, come here to us, where you once were, on this thy feast day, we invoke thee; even thou dost dwell in the ethereal regions above, even if thine abode is about the heavens, circulating with the choirs of angels serving Thy Lord, worshipping as a faithful Servant with the principalities and powers, come for a little while to us who honour thee, O friend Invisible, ... intercede for your country to our common king; for the country of the martyr is the place of his suffering, of which the citizens and relations are those who know him, have him and honour him. We honour your afflictions, we show forth your sufferings... (He then goes on to invoke the protection of the Martyr for his homeland which is being invaded by the scythions).”

Such instances can be indefinitely multiplied from both East and West. We know that every year there was an annual Qurbana in the cemetery when all the departed were commemorated. We know that the place of burial of Saints and martyrs became places of pilgrimage.

Paul: I can see now that in the early centuries Christians prayed to the Saints and prayed for the faithful departed. The only question is, does not the Bible say somewhere that the dead cannot pray?

Martha: I know the passages which all my Protestant friends quote:

Ps. 88:10 is one: “Dost thou work wonder for the dead? Do the shades rise up to praise Thee?”

The other is Psalm 115:17: “The dead do not praise the Lord, Nor do any that go down into silence.”

Mary: But Psalm 115:17 is followed by 115:18 which says “But we will bless the Lord From this time forth for evermore.”

Evermore, does not mean up to the moment of death, does it?

John: Again we have some theological problems here. If it does not sound too heavy for you, I will say that we don't create our theology from stray verses of the Old Testament. Or even from stray sayings of our Lord, who said "Let the dead past bury their own dead" (Mt. 8:22); this we do not understand in the sense that there should be no funerals at all. There were periods in Old Testament history that the soul survived in Sheol as a pale shadow of your self. That was not the teaching of our Lord. He taught us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were alive, since the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was God of the living and not of the dead (Mt. 22:32).

Thomas: What is the context in which the Psalmist has said these things in Ps. 88:10 and Ps. 115:17?

Mary: That is clear. In Ps. 88, it is Human crying out to God from a long-standing illness, asking for immediate relief. He says in effect, "what is the use of your healing me after I am dead? Heal me now, so that I can praise thee, which I am still alive." One cannot make a doctrine out of that.

Martha: What about Ps. 115:17?

Mary: The same thing. It is a dialogue hymn, in which two groups of people are saying to each other to "bless God" and "may God bless." And the choirs are saying that those who do not praise Yahweh are already dead, and that those who are really alive will eternally praise him. That poetic statement is not a basis for Christian doctrine about the Saints and the departed.

Paul: I think I have learned as few things today. I will tell you what I have understood.

First, the Saints, and all the faithful departed are all part of the body of Christ, and in the body of Christ, we are duty bound to pray for each other;

Second, praying to the Saints to intercede for us is not in principle different from asking living people to pray for us. Both do not detract from the sole mediatorship of Christ.

Third, the Church practiced both prayers for the departed and invocation of the Saints from the beginning, and it is only the Protestants who stopped it, due to some misunderstanding.

Thomas: I am also beginning to see that the Tradition of our Church is always reliable. But we modern young people need a lot of help to understand the meaning of many of our practices.

Mary: There are many other things I want to know about our faith. We should meet again soon.

Christian perception of Reality

Perception of the Universe - Some Philosophical and Theological Considerations.

We are part of the universe. We cannot stand above it to get a bird's eye view. We can transcend it in our minds. But never completely. For our minds are also conditioned by many limits.

(a) Our five senses are not equipped to take in all the data in the universe. A dog sees and hears different things which we don't see or hear. There are radio waves in this room which our sense-equipment does not pick up, but an ordinary radio can pick up and transmit to our ears as sound waves. In fact, with all our sophisticated scientific equipment and technology, we have access only to a very tiny segment of the spectrum of reality. We see reality only “as through a glass, darkly.”

(b) Our culture limits our perception. Our ways of looking at and understanding reality is severely conditioned by our cultural traditions, linguistic habits, our educational system by our historical experiences, by our geographical location, by our science and technology, by our religious heritage, and so on.

(c) Our perception is also limited by our interests. We perceive more readily what is useful to us. If there is a gold coin and a piece of tin lying on the floor, we are more likely to perceive the gold rather than the tin. If making money is our main interest, then we will readily perceive the easier ways of gaining profit, and our admiration will be for those who are making piles of money. If power is our main interest, the powerful and their acts will be the ready objects of our perception. If you are a capitalist, you are likely to see more easily the obstacles to the development of capital and profit, rather than the problems faced by the poor. Our interest determines our

perception and we cannot see some things in the world, because to see them in their true light would demand some difficult and radical changes in our own attitudes and actions. My perception of the world may not agree in all respects with yours, for my cultural tradition as well as my interests may not be the same as those of some of you.

The Basic Structure

We can see the universe as composed of inter-related objects in space, beginning with the galaxies of space coming to our own star, the sun, and our own planet, the earth, and our own continent, country, town, village, home. etc. This is the spatial view of the universe -- the universe of physical scientists for the last several centuries.

More recently, especially as a result of the Hegelian philosophical tradition. we have come to see the universe, not as a series of objects, but as a series of inter-locking events. Each event is a unit of reality related to both past and future events. The event is the stage in which the objects and persons play out the drama, and all events together constitute a process. This view has been popularized by thinkers like Bergson, Whitehead and Teilhard de Chardin. We will call it the temporal view of the universe. Historical understanding and Process Philosophy prefer this framework for looking at the universe. This is the view today of the social sciences.

A Christian view must take into account the views of both the physical sciences and the social sciences. But that is not sufficient. In certain circles of western thought, there is growing up a new framework, which comes closer to the Christian understanding of reality. And this framework is of primary significance. Most of our world analyses, while sophisticated and complex within their own framework, show the limits of the framework which does not allow all the data being taken into account.

This new framework is provided by a confluence of several fields

of new biological research. Prof. Burr of Yale was one of the early pioneers, much misunderstood by his contemporaries, of the line that life itself was a field of forces* an interdependent system of force fields. Many of these forces we do not as yet know very much about, but have evidence enough to suspect that they are impinging upon us.

A human being is not simply put together with three components called body, mind and Spirit, but is himself or herself a force-field which inter-acts with other force-fields. But so are animals, plants, all living things. The development of Kirlian photography in the Soviet-Union and ongoing research in what they call 'Bioplasmic Energy' in the Soviet-Union, has made it possible to perceive that there is in each living being a field of energy which grows and develops and changes in inter-action with other force-fields in the universe. The genes and chromosomes direct this energy in a particular direction of growth, but not the only determinant. The whole environment, with various known and unknown force-fields, inter-acts with the force-field of each unit in it. These force-field and their mutual interaction are not completely predetermined. The forces which we call consciousness and will are also components of this system of inter-action of force-fields.

It is very important to get this perception right, because it provides a more comprehensive framework for our 'World Overview'. I cannot go into detail here, but proceed from this to a Christian theological perspective which helps us to see the world from the perspective of the faith.

II. A Christian Perception of the World Reality

Again one goes into short-hand to provide the rough outline of this Christian perception of reality. We posit the following basic force fields which constitute reality.

* Burr, *The Fields of Life*.

1. The uncreated force-field which we Christians call the Triune God

This is the fundamental reality from which all created reality flows and on which everything else is dependent. We say that it is God Who, without Himself being caused, is the cause and ground of all. He not only 'called' the creation into being from non-being; He directs its movement forward to its *fulfillment*, gives the energy for that forward movement, and takes the universe to its goal. Without the guiding and sustaining force-field of the *energeia* of God, nothing can exist, and all that exists will go back to nothing when it falls outside this force-field of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. The created force-field of the process of creation and its evolution

This is the realm where our science explores the reality and its inter-relationships. Science is also a growing and changing body of knowledge. No philosopher of science worth his salt can today say that it is a body of proved knowledge. All they can say is that this body of knowledge stands up fairly well to certain reality tests and are therefore helpful for our understanding of that reality and for the development of a technology that allows us to control, transform, manipulate and use that reality for our own purposes. Science does not reveal to us the whole of reality. It helps us to uncover certain hidden aspects of the inter-relation between various sub-fields of energy (matter and life in there various manifestations). Matter, too, is a field of energy, we know now. So is life, as also consciousness and will.

3. The subsidiary force-field created by human purpose, will and action

As it expresses itself in person and community, in society and history. This human creation is the area where freedom, which is God - bestowed in creation, most clearly manifests itself, at least from our own perspective. The human mind or consciousness and

will, which is itself more than just the activity of the brain, cannot be located in any part of the human body. It is an aspect of the force-field that constitutes us as human beings, and has its own freedom, within limits, to choose, to understand, to will. to image, to create, to transform. It is an important concern of Christians that all humanity is able to develop to the full this freedom. But it can be developed only when that which stands in its way is removed.

4. The created force-field or anti-force, generated by created being in its freedom, the antiforce of non-being. non-truth, non-love, non-wisdom, non-freedom, which we call evil.

This force of evil, generated in freedom by the creation itself, contradicts and seeks to countervail the power of being and the good given to the creation by its Creator. This force-field is operative, Christians believe, not only in each human being; it is operative also in the institutions and structures of society; it works even in organic and inorganic matter, for we see that everything in creation is subject to non-being, driving everything towards disintegration, decay and death. This universe now open to our senses is subject to death and decay. It is not permanent. If it is to endure, it has to be different, not subject to Carnot's Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that all things are energy-fields giving out the finite amount of energy contained in them and moving towards the "stable equilibrium" of death and inert non-being. St. Paul says the same thing in Romans 8: 21, when he says that the creation itself shall be liberated from the slavery to decay and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We would be making a big mistake in our World Overview if we assumed that it is in this world of time as we now experience it that evil shall be finally overcome. The ultimate overcoming of evil demands a reconstitution of our world at all levels. Matter itself will have to be reconstituted in the New Heaven and the New Earth. so that it no longer obeys Carnot's Second Law, but is able to endure for ever as a non-disintegrating force-field.

We must also not make the other mistake in our World Overview that because in history the good will always be mixed with evil, therefore we can do nothing about it. Our business in history is to carry on the struggle against evil, to overcome evil by the good.

5. The force-field of the Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen Christ

The final overcoming of evil is, however, assured. It is assured because Christ is risen. Death, who ruled as king in our little world has been overcome. He has lost his universal triumph. "Where, o death, is Thy victory?" "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15: 54) when Christ tasted death and broke its fetters by rising from the dead. The power of the Risen Christ is the place where we see the uncreated force-field of the Triune God. And the created force-field of the human energy come together into an ineffable union for the redemption of this death-bound universe. This new force-field of the Incarnate Christ is also operative in our world, redeeming it, saving it, taking it from death to life, from evil to good, from non-being to being. We Christians are privileged to be conscious of the mystery of the Incarnate Christ's presence in the world, and are (ought to be) ourselves manifestations of that Incarnate Presence. This is the new dispensation of the Holy Spirit. where the life-giving, form-creating, liberating, personal power of God operates through a new divine-human community called the Church. Despite all her failures, despite all her atrocious betrayals of her Lord, despite all her lethargy and indifference, despite all her desire for power and glory, for comfort and popularity. she continues in a mysterious way, to be the bearer of the redeeming power of Christ. Without any civil or economic power, or despite her misuse of civil and economic power, she is a force-field in which the power of the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Christ, the power of the new economy of the Spirit, operates in a mysterious way to bring the creation to its fulfillment and destiny. The mystery is in the ineffable way in which both the uncreated divine and created human force-field's work together in a synergism which we believe but cannot understand.

6. The created force-fields of the cosmic powers

Our faith affirms that the drama of history is larger than the stage of history that we can see with our senses. The author of Ephesians tells us of powers and forces “in the heavenlies” (3:10) who are involved, negatively and positively, in our historical struggle. As the Jerusalem English Bible puts it: “The sovereignties and powers should learn, only now through the Church, how comprehensive God’s wisdom really is, exactly according to the plan which he had had from all eternity in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10-11). On the one hand, “it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the sovereignties and the powers who originate darkness in this world, the spiritual army of evil in the heavens” (Eph. 6:12). On the other hand, the heavenly ‘cloud of witnesses on every side of us, invisible but operative, are engaged with us in the same struggle of good and evil, between being and non-being, between life and death. Christians can subscribe to no world overview that disregards or overlooks this dimension of the process of the universe.

This, I submit, is the hasty sketch of the framework within which we must view the world, neither a three-storey framework of hell, earth and heaven, nor a secular framework which takes history as self-contained, self-generating and autonomous. All six aspects are important.

(An extract taken from ‘Take A Look at Our World’, Key Note Address at the YMCA World Council, Buenos Aires, Argentina June 29 - July 6, 1977)

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

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INTRODUCTION

God became man in Christ Jesus. That is the heart of the Gospel. The Word became flesh. Christ died and rose again. So what?

What is the good news in it for us today? That if I believe in Him, I do not have to go to hell? But that is only part of it, perhaps only a small part.

Salvation from hell and a reserved seat in heaven were not the terms in which the apostles announced the Gospel. Nor did Christ talk about salvation in that way.

The Gospel of the Kingdom had two primary points - it still has. First, Christ is not only risen; but he lives, rules, and is *present* in the world: the kingdom has come in Him.

Second, the death and resurrection of Christ, and his exaltation above all creation, are good news to the poor, to the afflicted, to the lame, to the blind, to the oppressed, and to all who mourn.

The purpose of this series of Bible studies is to see the connection between the Presence of the Risen Christ and our presence in a world of poverty, injustice, and oppression. Whatever else the Gospel may say, the presence of Christians in the world of today will have very little meaning if it has nothing to do with poverty, injustice, and oppression.

These studies seek to find the meaning of our Christian existence in relation to the Kingdom of God which has come in Christ, which is present with us, which expresses itself in a special way through the Church, but which has significance for the whole world.

These are not written from an Eastern Orthodox dogmatic standpoint though the writer belongs to that tradition. They seek to transcend the points of controversy between Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox, and are meant to be used by all Christians who are devoted to Christ and His Church and to the Bible.

These are written for individual use as well as for groups. The Biblical text must be kept in front of one while studying, whether

individually or in groups. These words are only pointers to the text. They are useless without a careful study of the text itself.

These are not systematic studies. They only point to the truth, which must be experienced through the life of worship and obedience in the Church.

PAUL VERGHESE

Geneva
Easter, 1967

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1

Blessed are the Poor

Luke 6:20-26

The Beatitudes in St. Luke's version of Jesus' sermon differ slightly from St. Matthew's account (Matt. 5:3-11).

But they serve the same purpose. Jesus the Messiah announced the content of his messianic mission through the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes are the summary of that sermon.

The Kingdom of God is offered to the poor, to the hungry, to the unhappy, and to the oppressed classes of society (Lk. 6:20-22). The coming of the Kingdom brings judgment on the rich and the well-fed, those who enjoy privilege and popularity (vv. 23-26).

This message must have astounded those who heard Christ. But in the course of Christian history, this element of grace to the poor and judgment to the rich became watered down. Slowly the Christian Gospel became concerned mainly about the 'other' world. But the other world *is* the Kingdom, which has come and is yet to be fully manifested. This world and the other world cannot be separated so easily.

It is only in our century that we have begun to see this good news to the poor coming within the possibility of realization. Some countries in Europe (East and West) and North America have been able to lift up the poor to a certain tolerable standard of living. Most of the once-poor in these countries have now enough to eat and drink and to clothe themselves with. Luke 6:21 is being fulfilled before our eyes. This has in its turn led to a 'rising tide of expectations' and a 'backlash of frustrations' in most other parts of the world, but perhaps especially in India.

If you examine the context of the beatitudes, you will see the kind of people to whom Christ announced the good news of the Kingdom (Mt. 4:23 ff: Luke 6:17 ff). They were the sick, the afflicted, the paralytics, the blind, the lame; not necessarily the religious and political

leaders or the ruling classes, though they too might have been part of the crowd.

The terms which we translate 'poor' or 'poor in spirit' mean much more than just those who do not have money. The Greek word *Ptochos* (poor man) stands for one who is subject to all kinds of misery and oppression. And it was to such that Christ offered the Kingdom.

'Blessed are you miserables! For yours is the Kingdom of God' (Luke).

'Blessed are the broken in spirit, for theirs is the divine Kingdom' (Mt.).

'The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the good news preached to them' (Mt. 11:5 cf: Luke 7:22).

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to announce the Lord's time of acceptance (Luke 4:18-19).

These are all words spoken by Jesus. The passage in Mt. 11:5 is the answer to the implied question. 'How can we recognise the presence of the Kingdom?' The passages in Luke 4:18-19 is the way Christ announced the content of his own mission, and the fulfillment of the promise of the Kingdom. In Luke 14:15-24, the Kingdom is illustrated by the parable of the banquet for the poor. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-28), the hero is a poor man.

St. Paul reminds the Galatians; that an important element of the reconciliation worked out in Jerusalem between the party of James and the party of Paul was that all should 'remember the poor' (Gal. 2:10). Perhaps the Pauline presentation of the Gospel did not emphasize this adequately in the beginning. Later on, the collection for the poor at Jerusalem became a primary concern with St. Paul (Rom. 15:26, II Cor. ch. 9).

St. James, on the other hand, had this concern for the poor from

the beginning (James 2:2-15; see especially James 5:1-6). He says quite Plainly:

‘Listen, my beloved brethren. Has not God chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith and heirs to the Kingdom But you have dishonoured the poor man’ (James 2:5, 6).

What concretely brings release and rejoicing to the poor and the oppressed is already a sign of the presence of the Kingdom. Blessed are ye poor. For yours is the Kingdom.

QUESTIONS

1. Look up other passages in the New Testament which put the poor at the centre of the Church’s Concern, e.g., Acts 2:44-45; 2 Cor. 8:2 ff; Mt. 19:23 ff; Mt. 25:31-45 etc.
2. In what way can we put the poor back at the centre of our concern? By giving more charity?
3. Where are the signs of the presence of the Kingdom today? That is, where do the poor hear good news?

2

Looking for the Coming of the Kingdom

Isaiah 25:1-9

One-third of the world today is nominally Christian. There are almost a thousand million Christians in the world. In India we have some 15 million Christians - Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. What difference does it make? Or what difference should it make to our nation? That is the question. Are Christians supposed to be just another minority group working for their own communal rights and privileges, struggling against the majority of Hindus and Muslims?

In most of the countries of Asia (except perhaps in the Philippines), Christians are a numerically small minority. What is God's purpose for us in our nations? We cannot as Asian Christians look back to a time when 'Christendom' or 'Christian nations' were a fact of history, as Western Christians can.

How do we find a way to become a dynamic presence in our own nation? India, with her poverty and injustice, dishonesty and corruption, hope and frustration, lack of leadership and initiative, is one of the saddest nations of the world today. Is there some good news that we can be and bring to our people?

Christ the King came into the city of Jerusalem seated on a donkey. He came healing and serving. He brought joy to the down-trodden and the oppressed, to the lame and the paralytic, to the blind and the deaf. He came as light for the world in darkness, bringing joy and hope (Jn. 3:19; 12:46). And he said of his disciples, in his great high-priestly prayer, 'As Thou didst send me into the world, so have I sent them into the world' (Jn. 17:18). Our presence in the world then has to be on the same lines as that of Christ's.

The Old Testament looked forward to the presence of the Saviour God. The 25th Chapter of Isaiah gives us some understanding of

what the prophet expected to happen when God comes (25:1-2). He has already done 'wonderful things', which are the basis of expecting more wonderful things to happen when He comes in person.

1. 25:2-5: What are the things He has done?

(a) He has judged the mighty nations that were oppressors. This is historically true in part, and in part it is yet to happen. The great empires of Alexander and Julius Caesar, of the Pharaohs and of Nebuchednezzar, of the Portuguese and the Spaniards, have all fallen. Their remains are mostly in ruins today. Even the more recent colonial empires of West European nations are now in the process of crumbling; a new form of economic oppression and exploitation, which we today call neocolonialism, is now spreading, awaiting the judgement of God. The poor nations are becoming poorer, while the rich get richer at the expense of the poor. We do not yet see the judgement of these nations and groups within our own nation but that cannot be far behind. God's judgement of the rich and the oppressor has been partly fulfilled, and still yet awaits full consummation in the future.

(b) God has been a refuge for the poor, the protector of the needy and the oppressed (25:4). This is also partly realised and partly to happen in the future. We see that the working classes in many countries have begun to experience the redemption from oppression and want. But in nations like ours, millions are still poor, still oppressed. There is no shelter for them from the storm of grinding poverty and no shade from the heat of widespread famine.

The kingdom has come in Jesus Christ. The poor have had the good news preached to them. But the total fulfillment is still a matter for future realization.

This future gets some content in the remaining part of Isaiah 25.

II. 25:6 - 8:

(a) The most appropriate symbol of the Kingdom of God is that of a banquet.

(b) Note that the banquet of the Lord is not just for the people of Israel, but for all nations (v.6).

(c) The banquet is rich and sumptuous - not skimpy and bare.

(d) The symbolism of wine is that of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of forgiveness and joy, of creativity and holiness, of righteousness and peace.

(e) The word translated the 'veil' in v. 7 could also mean the 'shroud' - the covering for dead bodies or for mourning people. The symbolism is particularly apt for India, where the 'shroud of gloom' spreads over all areas of our national life. The banishment of sorrow and suffering, misery and pain, belonged to the heart of the Kingdom as the prophets saw it. They expected the coming of the Messiah to be the occasion for lifting the shroud of gloom cast over all nations.

(f) The destruction of death is part of the messianic expectation (v. 8). A gospel that speaks only of material well-being is a perversion of the biblical message. 'Eternal life' is the quality of life that lives in this world without being enslaved by the fear of death, which knows that if this tent of our body is destroyed, we have a heavenly tent not made with hands (2 Cor. 5:1 ff). The Christian concern is not only for the 'good life' in the image of holiday resorts and vacationing centres. The good life, which accepts this world and rejoices in it, is also a life that transcends this world and triumphs over death. The 'wiping away of tears from all faces' (v. 8) means also giving people a transcendent hope, as well as giving them meaning, purpose and sustenance in this life.

III. 25:9: Only when in practice *both* these concerns of the Christians become real to themselves and to others, our talk about God will have any meaning for them. The God for whom India waits is a God who is both interested in and does things for the immediate economic, social and political problems, and at the same time brings victory over death itself; the God who not only punishes in his wrath and forgives in his grace, but the God who dispels famine and want, oppression and exploitation, pain and misery, hatred and dishonesty; the God who judges the oppressor and vindicates the oppressed; the God who gives life to those who live in the valley of the shadow of death.

In India we Christians need to realise the wide range of salvation

that God brings - not just the individual salvation in the 'other' world, but corporate and national salvation here and now as well.

QUESTIONS

1. In what terms have you been taught in the Church to think of Salvation? Is this teaching true to the Bible?
2. How do we understand the messianic expectations of the prophet Isaiah in relation to the hopes and fears of India today?

3

The Nature of the Kingdom

Mt. 13:1-25

The kingdom of God is the central message of the Gospel. In the Gospels, especially in Luke, the verb 'evangelise' has often for its object not people but the Kingdom. To 'evangelise the Kingdom of God' means to proclaim the good news that the kingdom has already come (Luke 4:43; 8:1; 16:16; Acts 8:12). In Luke 9:2, Christ sends out the twelve to 'proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal.' When the crowds come to Jesus, he speaks to them of the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:11). In the Acts, it is the arrival of the Kingdom of God that is the content of the apostle's message - not any kind of personal salvation in the coming world (Acts 1:3; 14:22; 19:8). Christ asks his disciples to make the object of their ultimate concern the Kingdom of God - 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things (food, clothing, shelter), shall be yours as well' (Mt. 6:33).

But what is this Kingdom which is thus the central concern of the Christian Church? The Kingdom cannot be easily defined. It was announced to the disciples in parables. They did not clearly understand. But some were attracted by it, fascinated and drawn to it without knowing fully what it meant. In this and the following study we shall look at seven of the parables of the kingdom, in order to begin to understand the Kingdom in its rich and diverse meaning.

The first of the seven parables in Matthew 13, that of the sower and the different fields, is well-known to us. We need only to draw some lessons for our time from it.

Here the emphasis is neither on the sower nor on the seed, but on the different types of field which receive the seed. The seed is the 'Word of the Kingdom' (13:19), and the field is humanity. Men receive the word of the Kingdom in many different ways and respond to it differently, with different results in their lives. The nature of the personal response is at the heart of this parable. Let us look at the narrative to bring to light some of its essential aspects.

13:1-2:

The Context: Great crowds are around the Master, fascinated by his personality, attracted by his many miraculous acts of healing, arrested by his authoritative presence which dared to question the religious leaders and disputed with them without fear. Many came looking for healing. Others came to be entertained, or out of curiosity. Many might have been attracted because they felt like sheep without a shepherd, and found in this man a true good shepherd. The point is that many came. Why don't the crowds come when our preachers go out to preach? Because the 'signs of the Kingdom' are not there. Words alone cannot draw people. The quality of life, lived in integrity and prayer, disciplined and well-trained, brimming with the power of God that performs miracles - that was the presence of Christ, who could also speak words of power. Today, our words flow, but the quality of life is lacking. So president Radhakrishnan could say, 'Christians are ordinary people making extraordinary claims.' We need to regain that quality of extraordinariness which made the words of Christ and his disciples through the centuries capable of speaking with power.

13:3-8; 18:23:

The different areas of the field where the seed fell have their own qualities.

(a) *The Path* (v. 4) The path typifies the kind of persons who listen to everything, but cannot take things in (v. 19). They are the majority of people in the modern world, where there is so much traffic, so much 'communication' through the mass media, so many comings and goings, so many travels and conferences, so many millions of words poured into one's ears. But it is like a beaten track. Everybody has access to it. It cannot, however, receive the seed, because it is so smooth on the outside, but hard and without any opening to the depths. Most of us have become like that, and the seed of the Kingdom falls on us, but it never takes root in us.

(b) *The Rocky Ground* (vv. 5, 6, 20, 21): This is another kind of superficiality found in many of us. We are eager to receive good

words. We think we have become good Christians simply because we can listen to a good preacher, respond to him emotionally, and generally agree with him (v. 20). Everything goes well when the environment of the college, the religious group, and the spiritual clique is pleasant and congenial for a 'religious emphasis.' But when one leaves the congenial environment and goes into the another society where different sets of values operate, then all the 'religious interest' of the student movement or youth club days disappears. When a small problem or opposition to the 'religious interest' appears, the seed of the Kingdom disappears from the mind. 'Having No depth' (v. 5); too many of us are like that.

(c) *The Thorny Area* (vv.7, 22): This is the kind of commitment to Christ which one tries to keep as one among many other interests. One goes to student movement or religious group activities, as one goes to the tennis or hockey club, to a dramatic society, to the debating society, or to the music club. After a while one finds that many of the other activities are much more interesting and these 'thorns' grow up and choke the seed of the Word. The Kingdom demands total and absolute loyalty. Not that one cannot engage in sports, acting or drama and debate if one is a Christian. The point is that the Christian commitment cannot be put on the same level as these other interests. The other interests have to be integrated from the centre - to the commitment to the Kingdom, to the joy and truth and beauty and justice of God. No single integrating commitment - many of us are like that. And so the thorns choke and destroy.

(d) *The Good Soil* (vv. 8, 23): The mark of the good soil is always its capacity to bear fruit. And let us not misunderstand the 'hundredfold, sixty and thirty' of verses 8 and 23 as referring to the number of 'souls' we save by our personal evangelism. When the Bible speaks of fruit, it always means *righteousness or unrighteousness*, a quality of life, of acts (see Mt. 3:8 ff, Luke 3:8 ff, Mt. 7:16, Mt. 12:33 ff, Rom. 6:22). Gal. 5:22 ff clearly speaks about the fruit of the spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, reliability, humility and inner strength. These are the qualities that the Kingdom ought to create in us. And they are all very relevant to the situation in our nation today.

Christ's Method of Teaching (13:10-17): Christ did not teach the same way as the writer of this present study is doing. He was not always discursive and logical. He often said things which sounded almost absurd and illogical - like asking people to pluck out their eyes if they caused them trouble. Responding to the Kingdom requires a different kind of listening from the manner of listening to our college or public lecturers. It demands a response from the depths, with the will fully engaged, as well as the mind and the emotions. The message of the Kingdom calls in question the logic by which we keep our minds as arbiter and norm for all decisions. The Gospel puzzles and perplexes, in order to open the depths of understanding. Parables are meant to puzzle and to attract only the serious-minded. The great opportunity is there (v. 17). When you are exposed to the word of the Kingdom, what kind of ears do we bring to it (v. 9)? Can we respond from our depths, or are we like the well-trodden path, the superficial soil, or the type with many interests but no integrating principle and commitment? He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

QUESTIONS

1. Does the kingdom of God use a different language and literary form from the class room or public lecture method? In what does this difference consist?
2. Is there a special way of listening and responding to the good news of the Kingdom, different from the way we listen to our lecturers or speakers? If so, what is the difference?

4

More Parables of the Kingdom

Mt. 13:24-52

Here are six more parabolic illustrations of the Kingdom. Let us list the seven parables:

1. The Seed and the different fields (13:3-22).
2. The wheat and the weeds (13:24-30; 36-43).
3. Seed of mustard (vv. 13:31-32).
4. Yeast in three measures of flour (v. 33).
5. The field with the buried treasure (v. 44).
6. One pearl of great value (v. 44).
7. Net which gathered the good and the bad fish (vv. 47-50).

These parables illustrate different aspects of the Kingdom.

(a) In the first four of them one finds the idea of growth. The Kingdom is something which appears in time and spreads or grows. It does not come fully developed.

(b) In 2 and 7, there are clearly the ideas that the Kingdom is present along with the reality of evil, and that there is to be a day of sorting out when the evil will be finally destroyed. Both these parables refer to the 'end of the world' or 'the close of the time' on (vv. 39, 40, 49).

(c) Parables 1, 2 and 7 emphasize the personal element of salvation. The seed that fell on good soil is he who bears fruit (v. 23). The wheat in parable 2 signifies a 'son of the Kingdom' while the weed symbolizes the 'son of the evil one' (v. 38). The symbolism of the good fish and the bad fish in parable 7 is obvious. In our understanding of the Kingdom we must not forget the fact that God does distinguish between good men and evil men (not necessarily between Christians and non-Christians or believers and unbelievers here).

(d) In parables 3 and 4, the corporate aspect of the Kingdom is obvious; but even in 1, 2 and 7, it is implied. In parables 1 and 2, there

is only one field - the world (v. 38). In parable 7, it is one net which gathers all the fish (v. 47). In parable 3, the whole Kingdom is compared to a tree, where the birds of the air can find shelter (v. 32). In parable 4, the Kingdom and the world are as indistinguishable as Yeast and flour (v. 33), completely mixed with each other. Yet we know the Yeast is there, though we cannot see it, and we know that it is transforming the whole of the three measures of meal.

(e) In a sense, there is a contradiction between what parables 2 and 4 say. The second says the process of history is one in which both good and evil are growing side by side - the wheat and the weeds are both growing apace. There is definitely the activity of the enemy who has sown the weeds among the wheat (vv. 25, 28, 39). The process has to be sifted out on the last day, the day of judgement. On the other hand, parable 4 has an element of what is often called universalism - the whole three measures of flour are leavened by the little yeast of the Kingdom. There is nothing to be thrown out. That is the point of having so many parables. The whole truth cannot be fitted neatly into one story. There is mystery and paradox at the heart of reality.

(f) Parables 1, 5 and 6 refer to a certain quality of response and search required in order to see the Kingdom and gain access to it. Parable 1 speaks of the good soil as one who hears the word and grasps it, and is therefore able to bear fruit. Parables 5 and 6 speak of the necessity of staking everything for the sake of the kingdom. The demand for commitment is total and absolute. It is not just believing that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins and therefore knowing that one is personally saved. The demand of the Gospel is insistent. Forsake everything and follow me - friends, family, riches, position, future, career. Let all of that become insignificant in comparison with the one pearl of great price, the field with the buried treasure, to buy which you have to sell everything you have (v. 44). The Kingdom is free, but not cheap.

(g) The illustrations are all chosen from the life of the hearers - the farmer who sows and reaps, the woman at home who mixes dough, the man who plants a tree or buys a field, the merchant of

pearls, the fisherman, and so on. Christ had this uncanny ability to take the most ordinary experiences of life and make them windows on the reality that lies behind and beyond all the sense-data, the presence of the Kingdom of God. We need to recover this ability to see the reality of God in all the events of our contemporary history in India, as well as in all of nature, and to interpret them to others in a way that draws attention to God and to His Kingdom.

(*h*) But we should be very careful not to be too logically systematic in our interpretation of the Kingdom. It still remains an unfathomable mystery. We can only begin to understand and grasp it. It will always be full of surprises. It remains God's Kingdom, and He alone knows what is its final fulfillment. We must retain this sense of essential mystery about the Kingdom. Christ asked his disciples: 'Have you understood all this?' And they said 'yes' (v. 51). But it is clear that none of us fully understand. And therefore he adds that final and eighth parable: 'Therefore every teacher trained for the heavenly Kingdom can be compared to a head of a household, who goes into his treasure - house to bring out new things as well as old' (v. 52). Some of these new things will constantly be coming up in history to challenge our ways of understanding God and His plans. We should be alert at all times to anticipate how the new changing times require new and fresher understandings of the same mystery of the Kingdom which has been in the world from olden times.

QUESTIONS

1. Do the parables challenge and question our usual understanding of the Gospel? If so, at what points and in what way?
2. How do we find a fresh interpretation of the Gospel of the Kingdom that is relevant to the issues of our day and is at the same time true to the Bible?
3. The first four parables were spoken in the presence of the crowds. The interpretation of the first two, as well as of the three last parables, was given only to the disciples (vv. 10 ff; vv. 36 ff). Why?

5

The Presence of Christ in the World

John 16:16-24; 15:4-13

A great mystery is contained in these words of Christ in St. John's Gospel. We should give heed to it. Only so can we avoid misunderstanding the meaning and modes of Christ's presence in the world.

'A short time - and no more you see me; again after a short time, you will see me' (v. 16). The apostles could not understand that.

What is the nature of this 'short time' when we do not see Christ? And when is the end of this short time when we shall behold Him again ?

In any case the time in between is a time of sorrow and suffering (v. 20), at least for Christians - while the world may be making merry on its own. But it is creative suffering - like the labour pain of a woman about to give birth to a child. And the pain, if it is not the pain of despair, must lead to the joy of bringing something new into the world (v. 21).

The time in which the Christian lives is a time for sharing in a life of creative suffering - not for living the easy-going, easily successful, popular and pleasant life.

We can undertake this vocation to suffer in the interests of others, because we have a joy to look forward to when we meet the Master face to face.

But does not the time look long and the work endless? Is it not 2000 years since Christ departed from this earth to 'go to the father'? Has he forgotten us and our world of suffering and injustice, famine and disease, illiteracy and superstition, oppression and exploitation, war and cruelty, poverty and misery?

No, and here is the great mystery for the Church because we do see Him face to face. We rejoice the 'short time' is already over, and

we rejoice in the midst of a life of suffering, and no one can take away the joy from us (v. 22). This is the strange paradox of the Church's life on earth. Christ has come back and is with us. After the risen Lord appeared to the apostles, the apostles 'returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God' (Luke 24: 52).

He said to them before he parted from them, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of this age' (Mt. 28: 20).

The long drag of time becomes transformed for us because of the risen and ascended Christ who continues to be present with us 'to the close of the age.'

But how is He present?

FIRST: *By our abiding in Him and He in us, through love:* 'If you remain faithful to my orders, you will continue to abide in my love. Just as I remained faithful to my Father's orders and so continue to abide in His love. These words I have said to you so that the joy which is mine may be yours as well, so that your rejoicing can become full. And my orders are simple: Love each other as I have loved you. There is no love greater than this - to offer up one's life for those whom he loves' (Jn.15:10-13).

To open our hearts wide to the amazing love of Christ, by which He was willing to sacrifice his own life for our sake - that is our source of joy. From that opening up and positive response to His wondrous love comes the capacity to love others as He loved, and to serve them at the cost of our own lives, our careers, our pleasures, our success in this world, our comfort and our convenience. And when our life becomes one that is continuously opening up to his love, and continuously serving and loving those in need - then His presence becomes real to us. Time becomes no longer something to kill, boring and dragging. Time becomes short; life becomes full of joy in the midst of pain and suffering. This is the true personal faith; we believe not just in order to save our souls. Our souls have been saved by Christ's loving self-sacrifice. To live in that knowledge is the motivation for loving, self-sacrificing service and the source of incessant joy in the midst of suffering.

SECOND: *His presence is through the Holy Spirit:* The Gospels and Acts make it clear that the life, death and resurrection of Christ constitute a series of events which culminate in the outpouring of the Spirit. Christ said to His disciples that when he ascends to His Father, the Spirit would come (Jn. 14:16, 17, 26; 15: 26; 16 :7 ff, etc.). The Spirit is Christ's presence in His disciples, i.e., in the Church. He is the creator Spirit who works from the beginning in all creation (Genesis 1:2), but He is present in a special way in the Church. Through Him Christ is known, and the community of faith is built up in Christ. He is the Spirit that reveals the will of God to the Church, prays through the Church in accordance with the will of God. He fills the community with his gifts, when the community awaits them in faith. He is Christ present in the Church and through the Church to the world.

THIRD: *Christ is present in the world through the actions of his disciples, i.e; the church, in the world:* As our Lord said in His high-priestly prayer: 'Now I am no more in the world, but they (the disciples) are in the world, and I am coming to Thee As thou didst send me into the world so I have sent them into thy world (Jn.17:11-18). The actions of His disciples in the world are to bear the 'name of Christ'; that is to say, they are to be the expressions of the personality of Christ. That is the basic meaning of 'name' in Hebrew - an expression of personality. We are Christ's presence in the world.

FOURTH: *He is present in the righteous actions of all men:* There are several other modes of Christ's presence and action in the world, but one that should not be overlooked is His presence wherever the poor and the oppressed are vindicated; wherever there is genuine love and self-sacrificing service; wherever the goodness, the beauty and the truth of God are manifested in the actions of all men - whether they be Christians or not. He is also present where the oppressor is overthrown, the rich sent empty away, the proud are scattered, the mighty are put down from their thrones (Luke 1:51-53). This is generally spoken of as God's action in history through redeeming love and evil-destroying wrath. But He is present not only through the great historical events, but also through the often unrecorded patient work of ordinary men in ordinary life - whether they be scientists, labourers, farmers, professors, artists or journalists.

Our concern is to be able to discern as well as bear Christ's presence in the world. The two poles of this concern will be the object of our next study.

QUESTIONS

1. The promises of Christ are on the one hand that He would return at the end of the age, and on the other that He is always with us to the end of the age. How do we reconcile these two promises?
2. Are suffering and joy opposed to each other? Or can they both be experienced by the same person at the same time?
3. What should be our attitude to those who are not Christians in the light of the insight that Christ is present wherever justice and righteousness are vindicated?

6

Our Presence in the World The Royal Priesthood of Christ

I Peter 1:22 - 2:10

What is the nature of our task as Christians in a world of poverty and injustice? There is no better phrase that catches the whole of that task as the expression ‘royal priesthood’ which occurs in the present passage. But both words need interpretation.

The expression itself comes from the Old Testament. In Exodus 19:1 and 6, the Lord says to the people of Israel through Moses: ‘If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own special people among all the peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a *kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*’ These are the words echoed in 1 Peter 2:5 and 2:9.

The whole epistle of Peter is thought to have been based on a sermon preached on the occasion of the baptism of new converts during the feast of Easter. One can imagine the newly baptised men and women, clad in white robes, assembled probably in one of the Catacombs of Rome before sunrise on Easter Sunday. The apostle stands before them explaining to them the meaning of their baptism, and giving the Christians their commission for life in the world. It parallels the Lord Yahweh giving his commission to the people of Israel on Mount Sinai.

As in the Sinai covenant, in the Christian covenant of baptism also the first element is the call to *holiness* (1 Peter 1:14 ff). What does it mean to be holy? We are often inclined to disregard the call to holiness altogether, or see it only in negative and pietistic terms.

Hope, Faith and Love are the positive aspects of holiness. The Epistle begins with an affirmation of hope (1 Peter 1:3 ff). Hope is not wishful thinking; a living hope, in the Bible, is the point of orientation of our whole life. It is the looking forward to the coming

of Christ and His kingdom. In 1:13 the apostle exhorts his hearers to set their hopes fully on the grace that is coming at the open manifestation of Christ. Our hope as Christians is centered around the risen Christ, present in the world in a hidden way, to be clearly and openly present in the world at 'the last day.'

In 1:7, the apostle speaks about the need for the genuineness of their faith to be tested by various trials and by suffering. Faith is that quality of strength, reliability, unshakability and freedom from anxiety that comes to us when we are firmly established in the love and grace of God. We can become fully conscious of this faith only when things begin to turn against us, and our usual strength and support is gone. In trials and troubles, in the face of opposition and persecution, the early disciples learned that the power of God supporting them in a hidden and interior way could uphold them against the strongest waves of opposition. The martyr demonstrated the strength of this inner faith by his fearlessness before the oppressive might of the powers of this earth. In India today we need this quality of inner strength which is not afraid of opposition and is full of hope in the face of obstacles, a faith which trusts, and relies upon the power of God to sustain us in trouble and tribulation.

In 1:22, the apostle exhorts the newly-baptised to sincere, earnest, deep, brotherly love. By subjecting themselves to baptismal teaching and by becoming part of a community of love and faith and hope, they have begun to be purified. That purity and holiness has to be continually developed, through sincere and self-sacrificing love towards others. Love in the New Testament is neither a feeling nor just liking others. It is the quality of mutual self-surrender and active concern for the welfare of others.

These three, then, are the positive elements of holiness - (1) hope, looking forward to the coming of Christ, and not to our own success and comfort;

(2) faith, being established solidly in Christ and therefore free from unreliability, dishonesty, anxiety and deceptiveness; and

(3) love, patiently surrendering oneself to others and being actively engaged in their welfare.

The negative aspect of holiness consists in 'not being squeezed into the mould of blind passion' - not being led by one's instinctive desires and lusts (1:14). It is not simply that these passions are sinful. They are actually misleading and deceptive. They promise you gratification, as the serpent promised Eve in the garden of Eden. In the end, however, they deceive. They give you, the moment's pleasure, but not lasting satisfaction. The best of contemporary literature in the west is today devoted to the theme of the deceptiveness of physical passions. Many intelligent men and women in all parts of the world have revolted against the puritanical, restrictive ethics of previous centuries and sought to assert their freedom by taking a positive attitude towards sensuality. For many it was a liberating experience in the beginning. But later one finds it is as enslaving as the puritanical ethics against which one revolted.

The weakness of the puritanical ethics lies in its basically negative framework. It seems to keep on saying: Don't do this and don't do that and you will be holy. But this is basically contrary to the Bible. The New Testament encourages eating and drinking but every negative injunction is followed by a positive demand for utilising our creative energies in the service of others. True holiness is achieved by the combination of hope, faith and love expressed in worship and daily life. Give your strength and time to prayer and worship and the loving service of your fellowmen, and the passions will gradually be conquered.

Our ability to become a 'kingdom of priests' or a 'royal priesthood' is conditioned by this call to positive holiness. *But what does 'royal priesthood mean?*

In the Book of Exodus, it clearly means that the nation of Israel is to serve as a priestly nation on behalf of the other nations of the earth. In other words, Israel, without any special merit on her part, is called to a special degree of intimacy with God. But not for her own sake - rather for the sake of the nations. 'All the earth is mine' (Exodus 19:5). They are to stand before God as a priest for the other nations.

This is also the calling of Christians, of the Church.

We are a people gathered from all the nations of the earth, not because of any special merit in us, but by His gracious calling, to a life of close intimacy with God. That is what distinguishes us from those who are not Christians. Not that we are saved and they are doomed. Rather, we have been given the privilege of knowing Christ, and through Him of living in great, close intimacy with God. But this is a great responsibility as well. We cannot take this call lightly and expect that we will be automatically holy. First we must keep in mind the two poles of our calling, namely, that it is out of His free grace that God has called us, and therefore that the call does not make us any better than others. There is no room for feeling superior to others. Second, our calling is always to an existence on behalf of others, Christians and others. This is what priesthood means. A priest is always one who lives to intercede for others and not for himself. And all of us have been by baptism incorporated into the one eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ who ever lives to make intercession for the whole world. Our priesthood is a part of this ministry of universal intercession.

But holiness is always a call. It demands a responsive action. 1 Peter 1:16 says: 'Be holy, for I am holy.' It is a demand and a gift. The demand is to grow up by the spiritual milk of the word (2:2), to put away all bitterness, resentment, malice and hatred (2:1), to love one another earnestly (1:22), and to come to Christ and to be built up by His Holy Spirit to become an abode of the Spirit and a holy priesthood (2:4, 5), offering up our own lives along with that of Christ on behalf of all men (2:5), and to announce by word and deed the marvellous grace of God that has called us out of the deceptive pleasures of this life, into the joyous light of expectant faithful, loving service and worship (2:9).

QUESTIONS

- 1. Examine the whole of the first epistle of St. Peter to see how in apostolic times Christians were asked to conduct themselves as a holy nation. How much of it applies to our times?*
- 2. How can our Christian communities become a holy people today in our present situation in India?*

Christian Presence and the Royal Priesthood

(Continued)

John 10:1-18

The priesthood of the Church belongs to every member of it. It is a participation in Christ's priesthood. We have such a highpriest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens (Heb.7:26), who 'has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf' (Heb. 9:24), who 'holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever' (Heb. 7:24), and 'lives for ever to make intercession' (Heb. 7:25). 'Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace' (Heb. 4:16), 'for we share in Christ if only we hold our first faith firm to the end' (Heb. 3:14).

This is not usually taught in youth movement circles, but this belongs to the heart of our mission in the world. Failure in holiness and in the priestly ministry of sustained intercession for the world lies at the base of our contemporary failure in mission. Our ministry demands the holiness of hope, faith, and love, and the continuing life of disciplined prayer if it is to share in Christ's ministry.

But what exactly does the word 'royal' mean in the expression 'royal priesthood?' In the Old Testament it clearly meant 'a priestly kingdom', on behalf of other kingdoms. But in the Book of Revelation, the concept takes on a new meaning. Revelation 1:6 has at least two versions in the Greek. One version says, '(Christ has) made us (Christians) a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.' Another version says, '(Christ has) made us (Christians) kings and priests for His God and Father.'

In Revelation 5:10, the meaning becomes clear. The four living beings of the vision of St. John fall before the Lamb, and they sing a new song:

“Worthy art thou to take scroll and to open its seals:
For thou wast slain and by thy blood ransomed for God
From every tribe and tongue, and people and nation
And made them into a kingdom and priests to our God
And they shall reign on the earth.’

The kingship or lordship, as we call it, belongs to Christ the God-man. But it is given to us as well. And it is this kingship which God has given to mankind that forms the second aspect of the mystery of the royal priesthood.

We basically misunderstand the lordship of Christ only as lordship or kingship over us and over the creation. That is true, but not the whole truth. Christ shares his kingship with other men. We share not only in his priesthood, but also in his kingship. We are also ‘royal’ because we belong to the household of the great king.

But we misunderstand the kingship of Christ as well as our own participation in it, if we take our image of a king from the arbitrary rulers of history - Ashoka or Akbar, Alexander or Augustus. The dialogue between Pilate and Jesus is very instructive here. Pilate asks Jesus: ‘Are you the king of Jews?’ (Jn. 18:33). Jesus replies with a question: ‘Are you asking for yourself, or did others say it to you?’ Pilate says something irrelevant in reply, and Christ continues, ‘My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of the worldly kind, then my servants would have fought, so that I would not have been handed over to the Jews. But my kingship does not belong to the same class as the kingship of this world’ (18:36).

The inscription ‘Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews’ does not appear on a throne but on the top of a cross. The Old Testament made a basic distinction between a king and a shepherd. Israel had no king but God, but they wanted one because everybody else had one. Read the amusing story in I Samuel 8:4 ff on how they finally got a king, Saul, head and shoulders above the ordinary people (I Sam. 9:2). But when Saul became an oppressor, God chose a shepherd boy, David, to be king, The Messiah was expected to be a shepherd-king. It is in this light that we have to understand Christ’s description of himself as ‘the good Shepherd.’

The passage in John 10:1-18 describes the qualities of the good shepherd, of the real messianic King. Some of these qualities are to be specially noted, as the exercise of our sharing in Christ's kingship.

1. The shepherd knows the sheep intimately, and calls them by name, and the sheep recognise his voice as a voice that can be trusted, because it always acts in their best interests (10: 3-5).
2. The shepherd leads the sheep out of the confinement of the sheepfold into the wide open pastures, goes before them, and feeds them (10:3, 4, 9, 10).
3. The shepherd stays by the sheep even when the wolves come, face the wolves, and when necessary lays down his life in defence of the sheep. (10:11-15).
4. The shepherd works in order that all the sheep may be brought into one fold (where all can be fed by the same shepherd) (10:16).

1. We need to develop such intimate and detailed knowledge of the world so that we know each sheep by its name. This is not merely academic knowledge of the world, but intimate personal knowledge gained by actual 'living with the sheep.' Our way of life should win for us authenticity. The world should be able to recognise the voice and actions of the church as always speaking in the best interests of the world and not for selfish purposes. We must by our way of life earn our credentials for being respected by the world. This comes from the holiness of hope, faith and love, and from loving, self-sacrificing service to the world.

2. We have always to help in the process of leading men from their confinement into the open field of a better life. We should become pioneers who show the way by daring to do new things, to challenge old confining fears, to lead people into the fullness of life, and be with the world in all its aspirations for food and freedom.

3. Such creative pioneering in finding freedom and food for the sheep will soon invite the wolves who want to feed on the sheep - the oppressor and the exploiter, armed with great power, cunning and

avarice. The Christian community takes the full brunt of the opposition of the wolves, and does not forsake the sheep for fear of the wolves. This identification with the poor to the point of death, in the face of opposition from the oppressor and the exploiter, is an integral part of the royal priesthood.

4. The Good Shepherd and those who share in His shepherdly ministry are anxious that 'there should be one shepherd and one fold.' This means, labouring for the one united Church under the one Shepherd, Christ. But it means more. It means also committing ourselves to one world, a single humanity, in which the welfare and destiny of each member is the concern of all and the welfare of all, the concern of each. To work to establish a single worldwide structure, economic, social and political, with full freedom and diversity, but without injustice, oppression and mutual exploitation, belongs integrally to our royal priesthood.

The royal priesthood thus consists of two elements: (a) the priestly element of a holy or set-apart community which exists for the whole of humanity, grows in holiness by growing in hope, faith and love, and continues in Christ's ministry of intercession, and (b) the pastoral, kingly or shepherdly ministry of identification with the aspirations of the world, close intimacy with all mankind and especially the poor, creative pioneering, fearless facing of opposition even to the point of death, and working for the unity of the Church and for a single worldwide structure of justice and welfare for all humanity.

QUESTION

1. What is the relation between holiness and mission?
2. Can there be true Christian service of our fellowmen which is not sustained by a life of prayer and intercession for them?
3. How can our youth and student groups give expression to the royal priesthood in the conditions of India today?

8

Recapitulation

II Cor. ch. 4

The royal priesthood, which corresponds to the kingly and priestly ministries of Christ, is the aspect of the kingdom given especially to Christians. How in practice do we express this ministry as young people?

The whole New Testament speaks in answer to this question. Let us in this last study recapitulate some of the elements that we have already encountered in the passages so far studied, and in related ones.

(1) *Grasp the meaning of our baptism:* Baptism is introduction into a new life - the life of royal priesthood. This is the life of an ongoing community, the Church, which participates in the eternal ministry of Christ. The first epistle of Peter makes this clear. 'And baptism saves you, not by removal of bodily uncleanness, but the pleading of a clear conscience in the presence of God, through the risen Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, who has entered heaven with angels and authorities subject to him' (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism is initiation into the heavenly community which lives in the presence of God, enabling us to join in the service of God. Those who practice Chrismation (Muron) as an integral part of their baptism (and not as a separate sacrament of confirmation) should know that the holy oil anoints them to the priestly, prophetic and kingly ministries of Christ.

(2) *Grasp the kingly priesthood:* The ministry of priesthood is on behalf of the whole creation, and not a means of personal salvation which is already given to us as a free gift. Our fundamental orientation of life then becomes that of the first part of the Lord's prayer. 'Father in heaven, Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as in heaven.' We do not seek any other objective for our ministry as Christians in the world, except this concern for the

coming of God's kingdom over the entire earth. That the hungry may find food, that the oppressed may be set free, that justice and righteousness may be established in society, that the world may rejoice in God - these form our ambition as Christians living in the world.

(3) *Prepare to express the kingly priesthood* - by training for a ministry of self-sacrificing service for the kingdom. If possible find channels for engaging in such service along with others right now. Our service may be in village work, in urban social work, in teaching, in healing, in building, or in pleading the cause of the poor, in labour union work, or in the ordained ministry of the Church. Let our youth and our academic career be a time of training by practice in the art of serving others without dominating them or using them for our own gratification. Let us respect those whom we serve, and consider it our privilege to be able to serve them. The Master came to serve and not to be served. We have the same role.

(4) *Express the royal priesthood* - by engaging fully in the ministry of worship and prayer. Make the Eucharist the centre of our life of prayer. We should not regard the Holy Communion (Holy Mass or Lord's Supper) as an occasion when Christ gives us his grace by feeding us. That is only part of the Eucharist. But primarily it is a participation in Christ's eternal act of self-offering on the cross. When the bread and the wine are lifted up and offered to God in Christ, we are offering ourselves, our bodies, our minds, our souls, our abilities and all we have to God in Christ in an act of loving self-immolation to the gracious and loving Father; not to appease Him, but because He is worthy of all, and our gratitude to Him can be expressed in no lesser way.

In the Eucharist we should learn to offer up the problems of our people and of the whole of humanity to God. We have a responsibility to lift up the sufferings and yearnings of those with whom we live and whom we know well. We must feel in ourselves and directly experience the poverty and misery of our people, and must intercede for the poor and the miserable and the oppressed with deep personal concern. Only that way the service we render to our fellowmen will receive the quality of authenticity. The Eucharist is the mode in which

the sufferings of this world are linked up with the sufferings of Christ on the cross, through the conscious act of the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit. But this must become a reality in our worship life, and a reality in our daily life.

(5) *Develop our life of continuing intercession for the world:* Christ is unceasingly interceding for the world. We should participate in this continuing ministry of intercession, not in order that we may spiritually grow, but rather in order that life and joy may come to the dying and the miserable. As busy students and hard-working people, we may not have long hours to engage in sustained prayer. The tempo of our technological civilization demands new forms of prayer life. The most accessible to all today is the habit of 'Ejaculatory' Prayer. This is from time to time to say in the depths of our hearts 'Lord, have mercy on the poor', or such short one sentence prayers, which can be said on any occasion when a lecture gets boring, when we have to wait for somebody, while walking to the college or to our home, etc. The content of these prayers should also become concrete whenever possible, like 'Lord, have mercy on our nation, and deliver us from famine, from corruption' etc. In the early morning, even while remaining awake in bed, we should lift up our hearts to God in loving, adoring thanksgiving and worship. Only thus can the subconscious mind be cleansed.

(6) *Devote our energies to creative service:* Youth is a time when the energy available seems to be in excess of the needs. Tremendous resources of muscular, mental and emotional energy make it difficult for us to control them as we wish. Real growth in the royal priesthood takes place only as we 'yield our bodies to righteousness for sanctification' (Rom. 6:19). The fight against personal impurity and uncleanness cannot be a frontal fight. It can be successful only when we use our bodily energies and emotions to work in the service of others. St. Paul asks us to 'present our bodies as a living sacrifice' to God (Rom. 12:1). The body, with the muscles, the nerves, the mind, the emotions and the will, is to be engaged in the 'spiritual worship' of the royal priesthood. The battle against personal sin is partly won in the fight for social righteousness and in dedicated, devoted service to others.

(7) *Become pioneers with others in bringing freedom and justice in the world:* Let us use our mind and our imagination to find ways of pioneering in fighting oppression and injustice in our societies. The Christian Church started schools, hospitals, and other institutions which have now become the common property of all - including those who are not Christians. This is our continuing ministry in the world - to be pioneers of new forms of good. We are not to imitate the world. 'Do not be squeezed into the mould of this age' (Rom. 12:2-a). Our task is to be transformed ourselves, and become a transforming influence in society, by attesting (demonstrating) what the will of God is for our time and place (12:2-b). When there is black-marketing and hoarding of food in our society, as intelligent students and young people, it is our job to find means to prevent such acts and to expose those who practice them. If our officials and leaders are corrupt, it is our job to bring the corruption to light. But this kind of destructive criticism may be too easy. We must also show new ways of doing things which change the structures of corruption and oppression, and at the same time inspire others to integrity and self sacrificing service. Creative pioneering is the main vocation of a minority Church.

(8) *Finally, be ready to accept failure* - and to lay down our lives with faith, hope and love. Christians should not be naive enough to think that by our pioneering action, our society will become a paradise overnight. The cross was apparent failure, ineffective in saving the world. But out of the apparent failure have come the great movements of emancipation and welfare of our day. We should not anticipate either success or general approval, in direct response to our actions. To act in faith is to be despised and rejected and to fail apparently, as part of the calling of the suffering servant (Isaiah 53).

(9) *In all things render thanks to God, and wait for his full manifestation.* Our job is to work within our mandate, with joy and thanksgiving. His presence, open and unveiled, will also bring the day of final release, final salvation, when the whole earth shall rejoice in the light of God. It is the anticipation of this final, open triumph of God in Christ that makes Christians an extraordinary people who never lose courage (2 Cor. 4:1-11).

(10) To serve these purposes, help to make the Church a creative fellowship, where honesty, integrity and love are the binding forces, and where hypocrisy and mutual competition and deceit no longer rule. 'Come to him (Christ) to that living rock, rejected by men but in God's sight, choice precious; and like living blocks of rock be yourselves built into a house of the Spirit, to exercise the holy priesthood of offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 2:4-5).

QUESTIONS

1. What are some possible forms of pioneering social action in India today?
2. How can the role of a Christian student or young person be understood within the royal priesthood of the whole Church?
3. How can baptism and its meaning become more of a reality to Indian Christians today?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

(For written work by individual young people, to be read later to a group):

1. If the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5, 6 and 7) is to be taken as an indication of what Christ meant by the Kingdom of God, how would you relate it to the problems of India today?
2. What did baptism signify in the New Testament with its Jewish background? Study in this connection the following passages:

Mark 1:4-11 (compare Mt. Ch. 3)

Acts 19:1-7

Romans 6:1-14.

3. How does the death and resurrection of Christ become effective for the salvation of the whole of mankind, with special relation to poverty, oppression and injustice? In this connection, try to see the relation between personal righteousness and social righteousness.

Especially see: Mt. 23:23-28; 25:31-46

Romans 2:1-24; 5:15-21

Ephesians 2:10; 4:17-5:2.

The Meaning & Nature of Diakonia

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

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1

To Serve and not to be Served

Then the mother of the Sons of Zcbedee approached him along with her two sons, doing reverence to him and asking something from him.

Jesus asked her: "What do you want?" She says to him: "Please say that these two sons of mine will be seated one on your right hand and the other on your left hand, in your kingdom."

Jesus responding said to them: "You do not realize what you are asking for. Are you capable of drinking the cup which I am about to drink?" They answer: "We are able."

Jesus says to them: "Of course you will drink my cup; but to be seated at my right and my left - that is not for me to grant; it is reserved for those for whom my Father has prepared those places."

The ten other apostles were quite annoyed with the Two brothers. So Jesus called all of them to him and said: "You know that the rulers of the nations like to lord it over the people and their leaders like to show off their power over other people. It should not be so with your people. But whoever wants to be great amongst you, let that person be a servant of the others. And if one wants to be the chief, let that person be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but on the contrary to serve and to give his life as the price of redemption for many others."

Matt. 20:20-28 (free but faithful translation)

The context of the sons of Zebedee episode is in Matthew 20: 17-19, and the parable which precedes of the house-holder who paid

the same wages to those who worked all day from sunrise to sunset, to others who came to work at 9.00 a.m., to yet others who were hired at noon, to some who started at 3 p.m. and even to those who worked only for one hour from 5 p.m. (Matt. 20:1-16). It ends with the curiously unjust principle that God can do with God's kingdom what God likes. The implication is that God's justice does not follow the principles we usually attribute to our concept of justice.

The parable of the kingdom ends with two statements difficult to exegete:

Friend, I am not unjust to you. Our contract was for one denarius. Take what is yours by contract and go. But it is my will that I will give to these last ones the same one denarius I give you. Am I not free to give what I want to give out of my own? Are you jealous about my being good to these people? Thus the last will be first and the first will be last (Matt. 20:13b-16).

It is important to remember this. God's justice follows principles quite different from ours.

It is also important that after having narrated this parable, so offensive to our sense of justice, Jesus was about to "go up" to Jerusalem for the great act of *diakonia* - that of laying down his life for others. Jesus calls the Twelve aside by themselves and discloses to them:

"Look, we are going up to Jerusalem. There the Son of Man will be betrayed and handed over to the high priests and law professors; they will condemn him to death, and will again betray and hand him over to the gentiles, to be mocked, to be whipped and finally to be crucified; on the third day he will be resurrected" (Matt. 20:18-19).

Then comes the mother of John and James to plead for special privileges of power, authority and glory for her two sons. She has accepted the requirement that the way to the kingdom was through the cross, at least for the Son of Man, the Messiah. She believed that

the Lord Jesus would rise from the dead to rule over Israel. She and her sons were prepared to pay the price, that of drinking the Messiah's cup of suffering with him. She and they accept the Messiah as the crucified and risen Lord. And one of them, John, is the beloved disciple, a special favourite of our Lord. But she was being fair to her two sons, that both of them should have positions of special privilege, honour and power. She does not want to show any favouritism to one of her sons, as Jesus did. In fact Jesus did something quite special for that one son, the "disciple whom he loved"; Jesus at the cross practically took him away from his own mother and handed him over to Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary in turn to John (John 19: 25-27). John took Mary to his own house (19:27), where she must have lived with John's mother.

It was for this special son and his brother that their mother asked for special privileges. More or less legitimate, isn't it? At least fairly reasonable. Now, the reaction of the ten other apostles also seems eminently reasonable: "We all know that this young man John is a special favourite of the Master. We wouldn't quite be up to questioning the Master about it. Maybe he wants to groom John to be his successor! Who knows? Anyway they had no business dragging their mother into it; and asking for *two* special positions - that is too much. What do those guys think the rest of us are - mere suckers? We too have worked hard, faced much, suffered opposition, left our family and friends to follow the Master, haven't we?"

So went the discussion among the Ten.

It is in this ambience of power-seeking, ambition and jealousy in which all the Twelve are caught up that Jesus drops the bomb: "The Son of Man came to serve, not to be served."

We need to look at the leadership of the churches and the ecumenical movement to see whether we are really much better than the apostles. "We are all Christians (we say), committed and all that. We could all have made better careers if we had gone into secular jobs and vocations. We have made considerable sacrifice to come and serve the church or the ecumenical movement. We are not struggling for power, mind you. All we are asking for is a little recognition."

Nothing has been so divisive of the churches as the ambitions, the jealousies, the power struggles among Christian workers and leaders. Quite unconsciously we fall a prey to that perennial temptation of humanity in the world, the desire for power and position, for worldly glory and honour. And so long as that is our basic orientation, the church cannot be united. There can be neither true unity nor genuine community so long as each thinks of his or her own power and position. Humble diakonia is in fact a central principle of the unity of the church.

Matthew 27:55 tells us that the mother of the sons of Zebedee was one of the people who used their own money to serve Jesus. See Luke 8:1-3, where we are told that these women were serving Jesus as well as the needy out of their own wealth.

The mother of Zebedee was thus already engaged in diakonia when she asked Jesus for the special favour of positions of power and glory. Is that temptation still not with us - that in our very serving we seek power and position?

The missionaries of a previous generation were in that situation. They served the people of the mission field sincerely, and in so far as they did that they had a social position, power and prestige which they would not have when they went back to their own people.

The new missionaries of the interchurch aid empire are in a worse situation. Some of them are stationed among the people whom they serve, but most are only periodic visitors. And they are welcomed so warmly and specially by the people who locally handle their hand-outs. In return for their diakonia they get to sit on the right hand and on the left hand of the powers that be. And if they are not properly received and feted by project-holders, the projects may suffer. There is something radically wrong with that sort of diakonia.

Let me enumerate four necessary conditions of authentic diakonia. Later I hope to show how Jesus Christ is the true deacon, the server and the Son of Man who came to serve and not to be served. I hope the word study will make it clear that the model for Jesus' Messianic ministry itself was the four oracles in Second Isaiah about the Suffering Servant, the '*ebed-Yahweh*.'

The four necessary conditions of an authentic Christian diakonia are the following:

- a) the willingness to suffer with those whom one serves and to give of oneself;
- b) humility as opposed to superiority about oneself, and respect as opposed to condescension towards those to be served;
- c) not using diakonia as an occasion for domination, privilege and rank;
- d) willingness to identify with the served to the point of laying down one's life for their sake.

a) Authentic diakonia should involve more than the giving of money or goods or services, more than the "sharing" of resources and personnel. It demands taking upon oneself the suffering of others. It demands laying aside the sense of self-sufficiency of the server, in order to feel and take on the sense of helplessness and need experienced by the served. The foreign missionaries of an earlier generation were better placed in this regard than the new interchurch aid and donor agency missionaries. The latter do not live among the people they serve, and only from a distance feel the pinch of the need of the poor. Their representatives in the field - those who handle "projects" and "programmes" - are usually much better paid than routine church workers, serve out of their abundance and live lives far removed from that of the poor whom they are to serve.

We need a diaconic structure based in the people of the local church, rather than in the donor agencies or the project-holder networks they have created in their "field." Only then will the church in the locality be able to exercise its diakonia function, largely financed from the resources of the local church people, and largely involving the local Christians themselves suffering with and serving the poor.

The present money-and-project based interchurch aid should thus become more marginal, in order to permit the local church to exercise its diakonia of suffering with people and giving of oneself.

b) Attitudes are all-important in authentic diakonia. The server must respect the served. If diakonia comes out of attitudes of superiority it generates the most unpleasant and unhealthy reactions

from the served. If service makes them feel inferior and dependent, such service cannot be regarded as Christian, for instead of mediating the healing love of Christ, it simply generates resentment and negative feelings of wounded pride. Christian service has no right to anticipate feelings of gratitude or ties of obligation and dependence. The present attitudes create resentment in other cultures, for they force them to sell their dignity for the sake of paltry sums of money that people desperately grab.

c) Diakonia is today often used as a means of domination by creating relations of dependence. Interchurch aid does not quite do what international aid does - namely use aid to capture markets and to exploit people in such a way that many times more than the aid flows back to the aid-giving economy through unjust trade relations. But interchurch aid is used in much the same way as international aid to create “spheres of influence” and areas of economic, political and cultural domination and dependence. This is particularly true of bilateral interchurch aid, but ecumenical aid is not much different, in so far as it represents aid from a sector of the Western Consortium which dominates and exploits two-third world economies.

d) Willingness to lay down one’s life for the sake of those served seems to be an acid test of authentic Christian diakonia. At present this seems an extremely remote possibility in the context of international interchurch diakonia. It makes much more sense in the context of the service of a local church to the people around or the people of that nation. Diakonia involves the element of confronting the oppressors of the people whom one wants to serve. This can hardly be done by international interchurch aid, but can be done more effectively by the churches in a locality mutually supporting and reinforcing each other in the struggle against injustice. At this point outside aid can at times be very counter-productive.

If Christ our Lord is the model for authentic diakonia, as we shall see later, then a diakonia which involves no cost to oneself, beyond “sharing money or personnel”, can hardly be authentic.

2

‘Abodah - Diakonia - Leitourgia: a Word Study

If the diakonia of death, inscribed on tablets of stone, came with such glory that the children of Israel were unable to look on the face of Moses because of the glorious splendour of his face, steadily fading though it was, how much greater must be the splendour of the glory of the diakonia of the Spirit?

If the diakonia of judgment and condemnation has such glory, how much greater must be the glory of the diakonia of righteousness? The first glory, which was partial and measured, is eclipsed by the far greater glory of that which came after. The first was a fading glory; the second, an abiding glory, is much greater indeed.

Since this is our trustful hope, with great boldness we advance, unlike Moses who had to put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel would not see that this glory tended to fade. Their understanding became hardened and inflexible. For to this day, every time the reading of the Old Testament takes place the veil remains over their minds. The veil is unlifted, for only in Christ it can be removed. Yes, even to this day whenever Moses is read, the veil is over their very hearts. For only when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Now that Lord, to whom we turn, is the Holy Spirit. For there is freedom and liberation where the Spirit of the Lord is. And all of us, when we turn with unveiled faces to the glory of the Lord, in us is reflected the same glorious image of God, and we are transformed, from one degree of glory to a higher one, as that glory is transmitted from the Lord the Spirit.

So, it is this diakonia that we have received, which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on us. So we do not lose nerve. But we renounce hidden and shameful ways. We no longer conduct

ourselves with deceit and cunning and dishonesty. We do not falsify the word of God. But in the open manifestation of the truth, without any mask or veil on our face, we present ourselves as we are to everyone's conscience and in the sight of God (2 Cor. 3:7-4:2).

Now regarding the diakonia which is for God's holy ones in Jerusalem, there is no need to say much... The diakonia of this liturgy is not merely to fill up the gaps in their physical needs, but it is a liturgical service, which will well up in many eucharists to God in that community. This diakonia is the demonstration of your own glorification of God; it is an integral part and logical consequence of your acknowledging the gospel of Jesus Christ, and of the generosity of your communion in sharing with them and with others. They in turn in their prayers on your behalf will, glorify God and give thanks because the grace of God has so overflowed to them from you. O what a wonderful, inexpressible gift we have from God! Thanks be to him (2 Cor. 9:1, 12-15).

The Hebrew word 'abodah', meaning work, service, cult, etc. and its derivatives occur more than one thousand times in the Old Testament. The word 'ebed' alone meaning "servant" occurs 870 times in the Hebrew Masoretic text. The Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament however does not even in one instance translate the word 'ebed' by *diakon*; 340 times it is translated *pais* or child; 327 times it is translated *doulos* which later came to mean a slave. In 46 cases the translation is *therapon* or one who takes care of someone; in 36 cases it is *oiketes* or domestic servant.

It may surprise us to know however that when our Lord says that the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, the expression clearly in his mind is the Old Testament concept of 'ebed-Yahweh' or 'Servant of the Lord.' In fact this Old Testament expression "Servant of the Lord" is decisive for coming to an understanding of the New Testament concept of *diakonia*. We have therefore to dwell a little on the evolution of this expression 'ebed-Yahweh' and the related 'abad' and 'abodah.'

'Abad' in the book of Exodus (mostly J passages) is worth looking

at, because it defines the purpose of Israel's calling, and therefore the calling of Jesus Christ and his church.

In Exodus 7:16, Yahweh is speaking to Moses:

“And you (Moses) shall say to him (the pharaoh):
 “Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews sent me to you, to say: “Commission (*shalach*, the root from which *shaliach* or apostle comes) my people (‘*ammi*) so that they may offer ‘*abodah* to me (*yaabdu*).”

The Septuagint, translates this thus: *exaposteilon ton laon mou hina moi latreusei*. Now *latreia* and *latreuo* are the Septuagint words for cultic worship. The same expression coming from Yahweh through Moses and addressed to the Pharaoh is repeated in Exodus 9:1, 9:13 and 10:3. In the English RSV it occurs also in 8:1 and 8:20, but I do not find it in the Hebrew or Greek texts.

Repeatedly thus, the purpose of the Exodus is clearly stated: that the people of Israel are to go out of Egypt in order to render ‘*abodah* or *latreia* or worshipful service to Yahweh. This is the original vocation of Israel - to be a worship-offering servant.

After the first four plagues hit Egypt (Nile-water turning into blood, Exo. 7:20; the plague of frogs, 8:6; the plague of gnats, 8:18; great swarms of flies, 8:24), Pharaoh changes his mind and says to Moses and Aaron: “Go, make your sacrifice to your God within the country itself” (8:25). Clearly the Pharaoh understands that the people want to make a sacrifice to their God; but he wants them to do it in Egypt. The fifth, sixth and seventh plagues still did not change Pharaoh's mind. Only after the locust plague finished off what was left by the hail-storm, there was a change of heart, first in Pharaoh's servants who plead with Pharaoh: “Let the menfolk go so that they may offer ‘*abodah*’ (*ya abdu*) to “Yahweh their God” (10:7). Pharaoh agrees to let just the men go. Moses insisted that all had to go - the little ones and the cattle included. ‘*Abodah*’ was to be offered not just by the menfolk. It was the whole of Israel, with all their cattle, that is to offer ‘*abodah* to Yahweh. The cattle are needed for the ‘*abodah*’ (10:26) for the sacrifice which forms an integral part of Israel's service to God.

I want to draw our attention to an element overlooked in our Old Testament studies. We have a conception of the Old Testament as centred around the Law on the one hand meaning mainly the Ten Commandments, and the prophetic call for righteousness on the other. Then by introducing a supposedly Pauline contrast between the Law and the Gospel, we write off the Law. But liberal Protestantism is anxious to retain the element of *mishpat* or prophetic justice as an essential element of Christianity. It does not very often notice the contradiction between the rejection of works - righteousness on the one hand, trusting only in justification by faith, and on the other hand demanding works - righteousness creating social justice.

My point here, however, is something else. Why do we see so much of the prophetic call to justice and so little of the '*abodah* or cultic-sacrificial service, with which the Old Testament is saturated? In order to get a balanced view of Christ's diakonia we need to take seriously this '*abodah* element which was central to the life of the Jewish people.

Moses is a prophet - in a sense the prophet, an *ebed-Yahweh* par excellence of the Old Testament. He was a prophet because he had stood before the Lord on the top of Mount Sinai and had received the word directly from the Lord. The standing before the Lord made Moses' face to shine. Exodus 34:29b says: "Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God." But that shining has to be renewed every day, by his going into the Tabernacle of Meeting, and facing God, doing '*abodah* to Yahweh (Ex. 34:31-35). Moses received from Yahweh not merely the Ten Commandments. Read Exodus again, about "the thing which Yahweh commanded you to do." We have the six days for the ordinary work, which is also called '*abodah* and then on the seventh day, as the Sabbath Israel is to do the '*abodath-Yahweh*, ceasing from ordinary '*abodah* in order to devote themselves entirely to the Lord's '*abodah*. The whole of Exodus chapters 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 to the very end of the book, the commandment of the Lord is about the '*abodah* of the tabernacle. And all the people, men and women, cooperated.

"All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything to the '*abodah*

which Yahweh had commanded by Moses to be done, brought it as their free will offering to Yahweh” (Ex. 35:29).

And what is the whole book of Leviticus about? We are blind to this because of the anti-clericalism and anti-ritualism bequeathed to us by the French Revolution and the European Enlightenment. Leviticus is totally the book of *‘abodah*. And we cannot understand *diakonia* without the background of the Old Testament *‘abodath-ha-mishkan* (the *‘abodah* of the tabernacle - Num. 3:7) or the *‘abodath-ohel-moed* (*‘abodah* of the tent of meeting).

In fact, in the Old Testament the contract or covenant, the *berith*, is characterized by two central relationships between two unequal partners. The senior or superior partner covenants to show *hesed*, or steadfast, unflinching, dependable love and mercy to the junior or inferior partner. The latter on the other hand keeps the covenant alive, reminding themselves, through the *‘abodath-heikal* or service of the temple, that service, that *Gottesdienst*, was the characteristic expression of the covenant, just as the eucharist is the covenant expression for Christians - the blood of the covenant shed on Calvary. “As often as you do this, you show forth the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26).

We need first to understand, in grappling with the concept of *‘abodah-diakonia*, that we cannot limit it to preaching the word and doing social action. There is another element, when we all turn to the Lord in the ritual action of the eucharist. The greatest meanings, not exhaustible by words, are contained in this ritual act of the church. The eucharist is the church’s *‘abodah-diakonia* par excellence, which empowers us and qualifies us to speak and act, just as Moses had to go back into the presence of Yahweh, in order to be able to face the people, time and again.

Numbers 4:47, in the English translation, conceals the centrality of *‘abodah*. What we read as “to do the work of service”, reads in the original Hebrew: “*la’abod ‘abodath - ‘abodah*.” The tribe of Levi functions on behalf of the whole congregation. The *‘abodah* of the tabernacle belongs to the whole people and not just to the priests.

Twice the expression is repeated in Numbers 3:7 and 8: “the people of Israel minister at the tabernacle” (see also Num. 16:9, 18:6, 1 Chron. 28:20-21).

It is this *'abodah* of the tent that would make the people of Israel a true *'ebed-Yahweh*, who can also become the light of the gentiles. And it is in this context that we should read 2 Corinthians 3:7-42.

In the new diakonia of glory, as contrasted with the old diakonia of judgment, there is a new temple and a new *'abodah*. That was what Stephen the first martyr began speaking about when he was hooted and booed and finally stoned - the temple not made with hands (Acts 7:44-50). This is the temple about which our Lord spoke on the occasion of cleansing the Jerusalem temple. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). It is the temple of his body that he spoke about (John 2:21). It is this temple which is “my father’s house” (John 2:16) in which there are many abiding places (John 14:2), the place which he went to prepare for us (John 14:2, 3). This is the temple about which St. Paul spoke: “Do you not know that you (plural) are God’s temple (singular) and that the Spirit of God lives in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16). This is the temple, “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole edifice is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built up into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:20-22). This is the temple to which Peter invites us: “Come to him, that living stone, rejected by men, but in God’s sight, elect and priceless: and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:4-5). This is the temple of which the author of Hebrews speaks as the “greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands” (Heb. 9:11).

The prophetic and the cultic are not opposed to each other. The cultic is the true matrix of the prophetic. Much of our prophetic speaking and social action suffers from this lack of a face that shines with the exposure to God. The truly prophetic will spring out of the truly cultic, when we learn how to tend this growing edifice of the new temple.

The WCC will be making a big mistake, whether in Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, the Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development, or the Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, in women's work or youth activities, in the training of the laity or in ecumenical leadership training, if we overlook this aspect of the face-changing inner transformation wrought by participation in the Spirit's edifice-building activity. If the body of Christ is not built up by the gifts of the Spirit, there can be no Christian diakonia.

But this is not just a matter of singing new hymns to new music. We have inherited this verbal fixation from our Enlightenment background. We will need to come to terms with symbol and ritual if we are to experience face-changing worship. We will have to shed our anti-cult, anti-ritual prejudices inherited from a neo-platonic non-incarnational spirituality and false opposition between the material and the spiritual.

In the 33rd and 34th chapters of Exodus, there is a somewhat amusing request from Moses to Yahweh: "Please show me your glory (*kebodeka*)" (33:18). And Yahweh replied: "I will parade before you all my goodness (*kol-toobi*); I will proclaim before you my name 'Yahweh'; I will show grace to those to whom I want to be gracious; I will exercise mercy to those to whom I want to be merciful." "But", Yahweh continued, "you are not capable of seeing my face. For no human being can look at it and survive." And again Yahweh said: "Here, there is a standing place for you. You stay there on yonder rock. And as my glory passes over you, I will set you up in a ravine in the rock. I will stretch my hand and cover you, until I pass over you. Then I will remove my hand; then you shall see my back, but my face is not to be seen."

Moses had to come back the next morning, and Yahweh did as he had promised. What Moses saw was but the tail of the trail of the glory of Yahweh, which had passed on. And yet his face shone from that exposure. The same Moses had been caught up in the glory of the Lord earlier (Ex. 24:15-18), when that glory came down as a cloud on Mount Sinai and Moses actually entered the glory of the Lord, by entering that cloud.

If our diakonia has to become authentic we will need to do some of the things Moses did, purify and sanctify ourselves, fast for forty days and nights and finally enter the cloud of the Shekinah of Yahweh. That is where the transforming vision takes place - in that cloud of unknowing.

The church as the 'ebed-Yahweh, as the true deacon of God, will need to learn to enter the cloud of God's presence and experience God's self-transforming glory - in the new temple, the spiritual house of the church. It is only from that temple that true diakonia can emerge.

3

Diakonia - Building and Tending the Temple of God

And he (Christ ascended) gave gifts - to some to be apostles, to some prophets, to others the gift of being evangelists, to others to be shepherds and teachers - all this for the purpose of equipping the baptized holy ones for the work of diakonia, i.e. for the upbuilding (oikodome.) of the body of Christ. The purpose is that all of them together may grow up into a single one - in the unity of faith and of unitive knowledge of the Son of God. Thus all are to become one mature humanity (a full-grown human person) whose measure is the fullness of Christ. This is in order that this new humanity should no longer be babies tossed about and pushed around by all the various winds of teaching that spring from the cleverness of human beings in their astute intellectual effort leading only to self-deception. What we are all expected to do is to be true in love, so that all grow towards him and in him; for he, Christ, is the Head. It is from him as controlling element that the whole body is coordinated and linked together in harmony, through the mutually connecting joints provided in the body, and through each part fulfilling the function assigned to it. The same Head ensures that the whole body grows and builds itself up through love (Eph. 4:11-16).

So keep in mind that you were once gentiles according to the flesh-perspective, called the uncircumcized by those who were circumcized in the flesh by human hands. At that time you were without Christ, alienated from the polity of Israel, the chosen of God. You were strangers to the covenants of hope,

and so you had no hope; you were godless in the world.

But now, you who were then far (from God's presence and from God's chosen people) have in Christ Jesus been brought in to be near, brought in by the blood of Christ. He, Christ, is our peace-offering who makes both gentiles and Jews one, tearing down the wall that separated them into fragmentation and mutual hostility; by his own crucified flesh he cancelled all the dogmatic commandments of the Torah, in order to create One New Humanity out of the two after making peace between them. And both are now reconciled to God in one body by the cross which kills all enmity. Then he came and proclaimed to you the good news of peace and reconciliation - peace to you who were far and peace to you who were already near.

It is through this crucified and risen Christ that we both now have access, in one Holy Spirit, to God the Father. Since we have this access we are no longer strangers or resident aliens, but full citizens of the polity of the Holy Ones, and therefore members of the family of God. We are built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as chief cornerstone. In Jesus Christ the whole edifice (pasa oikodome) is growing in a coordinated and harmoniously inter-related way; this edifice is Christ's body, a holy temple in him; you are also built in and incorporated into this temple, so that the whole temple becomes the presence and, dwelling of God by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:11-22).

These two passages from the Ephesian epistle bear witness to a developed understanding of the Christian message by the mature apostle Paul - mellowed by suffering, frustration and struggle but rejoicing in hope in the midst of tribulation.

This more mature thought of the doughty apostle to the gentiles needs considerable probing before we modern children of the European Enlightenment and inheritors of a distorted one-sided rationality can come to terms with it.

Our present concept of diakonia is often more the product of this rationality than of a mature Christian understanding. In order to come to terms with the biblical understanding of *'abodah-diakonia* we need to get two rich biblical symbols in focus - the symbol of (a) "the tent of God in which the shekinah of Yahoveh abides", and (b) "the up-building of the Temple made without hands."

These are both symbols central to the Bible and to the diakonia of Jesus the Christ. They together constitute the central symbols of the incarnation of the Son of God.

The Hebrew word *'shekinah'* comes from the verb *shaken* or *shakan* which means "to settle down, to dwell, to rest, to lie down, to abide." As for Yahweh's dwelling, it is in eternity - not in time or space. Isaiah 57:15 speaks of the "High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy." Yahweh tells us where God dwells (same verse): "I dwell in the High and Holy and also in one who is bruised and lowly-in-spirit to lift up the spirit of the lowly and to lift up the heart of the bruised."

God's "natural habitat" is thus dialectical - on the one hand in the inaccessible heights of holiness beyond time and space, and on the other in the bruised and the broken-hearted.

Both dwellings or "presences" of God are God's *shekinah* or *shekinath* (plural). This is not transcendence and immanence as we too easily talk about in theology. It is God's dialectical dwelling. It is not a question of spatio-temporal transcendence as a going-beyond, nor is it immanence in the spatio-temporal sense. It is presence, dwelling, settling down, resting and abiding - God's *prosopon*, God's *shekinah*, God's face or personal presence - the *penei* - Yahweh or *panai* of Exodus 33:14 ("My presence will go with you") and Psalms 41:14, 42:12, and 43:5 in the Hebrew text.

This "personal presence" or indwelling of Yahweh the Holy One

is what makes Israel holy. Holiness fits in with the dwelling of God, and it is the dwelling of Yahweh that creates the Holy of Holies. "Make yourselves holy and be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44, 45). It is God's *dwelling* that makes a person, place or thing holy - not, as many commentators say, *being set apart* for the exclusive use of God. The holiness of Israel did not come from their being set apart for Yahweh's use - it is the presence and indwelling of Yahweh that made the people of Israel holy. In our relationalistic age we think of holiness in functional terms. But the biblical witness interprets holiness in terms of the presence and indwelling of God.

If Christians are "saints" or 'holy', it is not because they are set apart for God, but because God indwells them, because God's presence is in them.

Once this central aspect of God's indwelling is fully grasped we can move on to the tent or temple symbolism in the Old and New Testaments. The tabernacle or worship tent for which detailed instructions were given to Moses on Mount Sinai by Yahweh is the heart of the symbolism of God's abiding in and among humans.

Exodus 40:1 tells us about the erection of the "tabernacle of the tent of meeting" on New Year's day (first day of the first month). This J passage speaks of the *mishkan ohel-moed* (see also Ex. 39:32) - literally the "abode of the tent of meeting at set time." It is also called just *ohel-moed* (the tent of appointed meeting) (Ex. 27:21; 40:22, 24) where the symbolism demands that a lighted lamp of pure gold should permanently be burning (Ex. 27:21), and the table with the "bread of the presence" (*lechem-ha panim* - literally "bread of the faces", Ex. 35:13; 39:36) should be perpetually there. The light and the bread are both symbols of the presence of God.

There were other symbols of the presence - the golden altar for offering incense (Ex. 39:38, 40:5), the anointing oil with which all the tabernacle and its utensils were anointed (40:9), symbolizing the presence and sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit; the bronze altar for sacrifices; the laver for washing (40:7), the priests' vestments, especially the "holy crown of pure gold", marked "Holy to Yahweh" (*godesh leyahweh* - 39:30), and Aaron himself, anointed with the holy oil, becomes a symbol (40:12ff.).

The central symbol was the “ark of the testimonies” (*aron ha-edoth*), the acacia wood box, 45” x 27” x 27”, covered with solid gold inside and outside, with a solid gold lid 45” x 27” (Ex: 37:1ff.).

A summary of the total complex of symbols is given in Hebrews 9:1ff. This summary is probably based on the Exodus account but gives us the additional information that inside the “ark of the covenant” (*kiboton tes diathekes*), there were also, in addition to the two slabs with the ten commandments which the Exodus account mentions, also a golden pot of manna and Aaron’s rod which budded (Heb. 9:4).

The great symbol is perhaps the lid of the ark - called *Kapporeth* (atonement) in Hebrew and *Hilasterion* (mercy-seat) in Greek. This symbol is associated with the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, who is called the mercy-seat (Rom. 3:25). This is, in a sense, the presence of God par excellence - in forgiveness, mercy, atonement and reconciliation.

As I have said, we are children of Enlightenment rationality, word-oriented rather than symbol-responding. So we have inhibitions in responding to this very rich symbol system to which Moses gave the highest importance. The two tablets of the Torah found their place within this symbol-system, inside the ark of the covenant, and not independently of it. It was at Yahweh’s explicit and detailed command that the symbol-system of the tabernacle was set up. The book of Exodus devotes 16 chapters to the tabernacle and its arrangements (25-40).

The tabernacle and its successor the Temple in Jerusalem continue to occupy a central place throughout the Old Testament. The priests, the Levites, and the Temple play as important a role in the Old Testament as the prophets do. The Temple occupied the locus of loyalty for all Israelites wherever they lived, and all Israelite males were under statutory obligation to “appear before the Lord” three times a year, for the major festivals (Ex. 34:23).

The tabernacle was later set up at Shiloh (Josh. 18:1, 1 Sam. 1:21) and Shechem (?) and in Baale-Judah (2 Sam. 6:2), or Kereath-Jearim) 1 Chron. 13:6) until David brought it to his new city Jerusalem, where

it for a while rested in a tent (2 Sam. 6:17, 7:2, 1 Chron. 15). Solomon built the house for the ark of the presence (1 Kings 6). The building of this three-storey temple of cedar and hewn stone, as well as its elaborate dedication, again receives lengthy treatment in the Book of Kings. This temple, unlike Moses' Tabernacle, was built with forced, not voluntary, labour (1 Kings 5:13ff.); 30,000 workers had to be conscripted, in addition to 70,000 transport labourers and 80,000 hewers of stone, under 3,300 superiors. The description extends to several chapters in the Book of Kings (1 Kings 5-9) and in the Book of Chronicles (1 Chron. 13-17, 21-25, 28-29, 2 Chron. 2-8 etc.).

King Jehoash, several generations later, repaired the temple (2 Kings 12). Jehoash was one of the few kings of Judah and Israel about whom the scripture says: "Jehoash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all his days" (2 Kings 12:2) and credit is given to his priest-adviser, Jehoiada. The same is said of Hezekiah who repaired the temple (2 Chron. 29).

The third repair job of the Temple was undertaken by King Josiah, the great reformer (2 Kings 22, 2 Chron. 29, 34:8ff. etc.). It was in the process of repairing the Temple that the scroll of the law of Moses was rediscovered, leading to a new religious renewal (2 Chron. 34:14ff.).

It was this twice-repaired temple that Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed, burned and razed to the ground (2 Kings 25). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are devoted to the rebuilding of the Temple and its walls.

The prophetic witness, such as in Ezekiel and Jeremiah, also makes frequent reference to the Temple. So do some of the minor prophets. For example Haggai's prophecy centres around the rebuilding of the temple. So does that of the prophet Zachariah (cf. 1:16; 4:9; 5:12ff., 8:9, etc.).

However, parallel to this demand for the symbol-structure of temple and priesthood, there is also the demand for social and personal righteousness. It is a mistake, however, to assume that the cultic and the prophetic are opposed to each other in the Old Testament. The prophetic testimony may make light of fast and sacrifice, but it never

says anything against the symbol structure of the Temple. In fact the prophetic testimony reaffirms that symbol structure.

We are mistaken in reading back our Enlightenment rationalism-ethicism into the prophetic testimony of the Old Testament. Our anti-clericalism and anti-cultism are inherited, not from the New or Old Testaments, but from the European Renaissance-Reformation-Enlightenment syndrome.

The Temple is at the heart of the Old Testament. It is the service of the Temple that is pre-eminently called *diakonia* or *'abodah* in the Old Testament. One whole tribe (the Levites) from among the twelve tribes of Israel is set apart for the work of the service of *diakonia* of the Temple.

The Temple symbolism begins to reveal more of its meaning content in the New Testament. And to this we now turn in order to clarify the meaning of *diakonia* for Christians.

The temple in the New Testament

Let us first consider the testimony of our Lord himself. We see that this testimony goes back to the infancy narratives.

In the Lucan narrative, the Temple is the locus of the annunciation to Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, the fore-runner of the Messiah (Luke 1:8ff.). The entry of Jesus into the Temple as an eight-day old infant is also given prominent treatment (Luke 2:22ff.). Anna, the 84-year old prophetess, was a permanent resident of the Temple, so to speak (Luke 2:37). Joseph and Mary, living in Nazareth, took Jesus every year to the Temple for the feast of Passover (2:41), and at the age of 12 Jesus stayed in the Temple, forsaking his earthly guardians. When the parents finally claim Jesus, he says to them: "Did you not know that I must be in *my father's house*?" (Luke 2:49).

This expression "my father's house" used by the 12-year-old Jesus seems to occupy a central place in Jesus' understanding of his own role as Messiah.

In the Johannine account, the first major teaching act of Jesus

after the wedding in Cana is the cleansing of the Temple. “And he said to the sellers of pigeons: Take away these from here. Do not make my Father’s house a trading house” (John 2:16).

This “my Father’s house” takes some significant shifts in meaning in the Johannine account. When the Jews asked the question: “What authorizing sign do you show us for this?”, the answer was: “Tear down this Temple and in three days I will raise it.” The evangelist goes on to say: “This he said in relation to the *temple of his body*” (2:21).

This trans-metaphorical identification of the Temple and Christ’s incarnate body takes on further meaning-shades with the last great discourse in the Johannine account.

In *‘my Father’s house’* many are the abodes. If it were not so, would I have said to you that I am leaving in order to make ready a place for you? So if I leave and prepare a place for you, I will naturally come back and receive you to myself, so that where I am there you can also be (John 14:2-4).

This indeed is the purpose of the incarnation - to prepare the place of the new temple for us. The death of Christ and his resurrection and ascension, as well as the advent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, are all to be seen as stages in “preparing the place”, or “building the Temple” of Christ’s body.

This seems to have been the point of our Lord’s words: “Dwell in me, and I in you” (John 15:4). Here however the image has shifted from that of the body to that of the grapevine.

The Temple-body metaphor is central in the first Christian martyr’s testimony. In Acts 7 we have the text of Stephen’s speech, probably recorded by St Luke or St Paul as eye-witnesses. Stephen starts with God’s appearance to Abraham and the experience of the people of Israel, but soon shifts to the Temple metaphor. In 7:44 the theme of the “tent of witness” becomes central to his speech. It was made according to a design given by God.

By 7:48 Stephen made the *tour de force* which cost him his life. He openly said that God does not dwell in temples made by human beings, temples of brick and mortar. It was heard by the pro-temple majority in his audience as an indictment of the Jerusalem Temple. Immediately after saying that “Solomon built for God a house”, he stated that the Most High does not dwell in “manufactured” entities. He was about to speak of the “un-manufactured temple” of the body of Christ, when his audience ostensibly became enraged and started booing.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says (3:5):

“Moses was faithful in the whole house of God as a servant; but Christ was faithful in his house as a Son; whose house we are.”

The whole epistle seeks first to point to the symbol system of the Temple and then to the reality which is signified by that symbol system.

The theme is ubiquitous in the New Testament. The first epistle of Peter exhorts Christians to become living stones built into the living Temple of the body of Christ - “the spiritual house” (4:17).

We see the teaching very clearly in St Paul’s writings:

Don’t you know that you (plural) are God’s temple (*naos Theou*) and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone tries to break apart God’s temple, God will break him apart. For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you (plural) are (1 Cor. 3.16-17).

Again:

what, do you not know that your (plural) body (singular) is the temple of the Holy Spirit in you, which body you have from God, and is not your own? Your body was purchased at a great price. Glorify God therefore in your body (1 Cor. 6:19).

Also:

what common foundation (*sunkatathesis*) has the Temple of God with idols? We are the (living) Temple of the living God (2 Cor. 6:16).

It is in the context of these affirmations that we have to look at the Ephesian passages for our study. It is the service (*'abodah, diakonia*) of this Temple that constitutes true diakonia.

Oikodome as diakonia

The living temple, which is also a growing temple, needs building up. We Christians are baptized for this diakonia. On the one hand, we are to grow with the living temple; on the other, we must help the living temple to grow.

It is this process that the New Testament calls *oikodome*. This is the central task of the church, for which the various gifts or *charismata* of the Spirit are given to the church (Eph. 4:11). No charisma of the Holy Spirit is given for the private enjoyment of the recipient.

1 Corinthians 12 is the *locus classicus* of the discussion on the charismata of the Holy Spirit. And the *charismata* are the key to *oikodome* or upbuilding. One of the questions put by the Corinthian Christians to the apostle Paul was about the comparative values of the various gifts of the Holy Spirit - especially the gift of prophecy and the gift of speaking in tongues. And St Paul gives an unequivocal answer to their question in 1 Corinthians 14:5:

“The one who prophesies is greater than the one speaking in tongues, except when it is interpreted, so that the church receives upbuilding.”

On what basis does St Paul give such a judgment? What is the criterion of apostolic assessment? It is given in 1 Corinthians 14:4:

“The speaker in tongues edifies (*oikodomei*) oneself. The one who prophesies upbuilds (*oikodomei*) the church.”

In other words the criterion of assessing the comparative advantages of the various gifts of the Holy Spirit is simply the degree to which they build up the Temple of God, the body of Christ, the church. If a gift serves only to build up oneself, it is not to be so highly estimated. All gifts are given for the purpose of upbuilding the whole edifice.

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good or common usefulness” (1 Cor. 12:4).

In the apostle’s mind, the *charismata* and the *diakonia* are coordinated, along with the energy for the operation or *energemata*. All three are given in the plural. There are various gifts, various services and various operations, but behind all of it is the same Holy Spirit doing the *oikodome* or upbuilding of the living temple of God.

“There are distinctions among the *charismata* (gifts), but the Spirit is the same One. And there are distinctions among the *diakonai* (services), but the Lord (who serves) is the same One. And there are distinctions among the *energemata* (the operational energies), but it is the same God who energizes all these operations in all” (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

All three are geared to the upbuilding of the Temple of God. The various *diakonai* or services are all dependent on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and on the energizing power of God which operates through the various services.

The difficulty with much that goes by the name of *diakonia* in the church is precisely this dissociation from the *charismata* and the *energemata*. When *diakonia* becomes simply a matter of efficient organization unempowered by the *charismata* and the *energemata*, dissociated from the *oikodome* or upbuilding of the body of Christ, it can no longer be Christian *diakonia*. It becomes another service operation like those in the world and those run by governments and voluntary agencies.

It is hence very important for the World Council of Churches as well as for the member churches to go back to the roots of *diakonia* in the ‘*abodah*’ of the Old Testament, in the ‘*abodah*’ of the Suffering Servant, and in the *diakonia* of upbuilding the living Temple of God, so that it may bear fruit for the glory of God.

The more interchurch aid becomes a set of donor agencies and aid-receiving projects, the less it will be related to the upbuilding of the life of the living Temple of God.

This has actually happened. It happened before in the life of the missionary movement when it became independent of the life of the “sending church” and became a matter of voluntary organizations called “missionary societies.” But at least at the other end the missionary societies kept in touch with the nascent church and received nourishment from it.

We have now a situation where donor agencies and project-holders have only a very limited relationship to the communities of faith at home and abroad. The old missionary empire which functioned as a para-church beside the official churches is now replaced with an interchurch empire largely alienated from churches in aid-giving and aid-receiving countries.

Unless interchurch aid diakonia is reintegrated with the life of the worshipping communities in all countries, it cannot be recipient of the true operations of God geared to the upbuilding of the church.

Oikodome for diakonia

Diakonia is an essential aspect of *oikodome*, and should always keep the latter in mind. But *oikodome* or upbuilding itself is for diakonia. This is the dialectical relationship between the two.

Upbuilding of the church for its twofold ministry is the central task of the World Council of Churches. One is aware that this way of looking at the church’s task is unfamiliar to the Reformation tradition. Strangely enough, it is unfamiliar also to the Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions.

Yet it is an eminently biblical approach. It is the central idea in the writings of the apostles John, Paul and Peter in the New Testament, as we have shown. The reason why it does not appeal to many modern Christians can be traced to the prejudice against church and clergy inherited from the European Enlightenment rationalism.

Oikodome or upbuilding of the church is always *for* and *by* its double diakonia: the service of God in worship on behalf of the people of the world and the service of fellow human beings in the name of God. As the church truly fulfills its double mediation - the prayers and aspirations of the world to God, and God’s grace and love and

mercy and compassion as well as the gospel to the non-Christian world - it will be built up.

It is as the church fulfills its royal priesthood as mediator between God and God's world, interceding, participating in Christ's self-offering to God the Father, and in God's self-giving through Christ to the world, that the church's unity is built up.

This twofold diakonia is implied in the very basis of the WCC, though perhaps not the element of upbuilding or *oikodome*. If the diakonia concept in the Reformed and Lutheran tradition can be redeemed and made to have both its senses, that is, towards God and towards humanity, the twin aim of the WCC would be better served - unity and service. Diakonia as worship of God and the upbuilding of the church for its double diakonia have been the two central emphases for which the WCC has been groping for some time now. If it can grasp this now, and transform its programme and structure accordingly, these could lead to the much-needed renewal in the World Council of Churches and in the church of Jesus Christ in general.

For it is the Spirit of God who is living in us and working through us. And the greatest gift of the Spirit is love - *agape*. There is no gift as potent as *agape* for the purpose of *oikodome*. Love builds up.

The Diakonia of the Suffering Servant - the Royal Priesthood

The diakonia of the Suffering Servant

My effort is not to place any obstacle in anyone's way, in any way, so that the diakonia may in no wise be faulted. No, on the contrary, we as God's deacons (or, as stated in 5:20-21, as ambassadors on behalf of Christ) want to present our credentials to you - in great and patient suffering, in afflictions, in want, in narrow escapes, in calamities, in beatings, in imprisonments, in toil and turmoil, in sleeplessness and hunger - but also in clean dealings, in full knowledge, in patience, in goodness, in the Holy Spirit, in unfeigned love, in the word of truth, in the power of God, clad with the armour of righteousness on the left and the right; taking glory and dishonour alike; in bad repute as well as good; treated as imposters or as honest, as unimportant or as recognized, as dying, and yet we live; as tormented but we do not die; as weeping and yet we are full of joy, as poor but making many rich, as having nothing, yet owning all (2 Cor. 6:3-10).

We need constantly to repeat to ourselves that behind the New Testament concept of diakonia there are two distinct but related Old Testament concepts - the calling of Israel for the service of God (*'abodath-Yahweh*), and the Old Testament model of the Suffering Servant of the Second Isaiah oracles as the true executor and fulfiller of that diakonia - the *ebed-Yahweh* who suffers on behalf of others and by whose stripes they are healed.

This is the context in which Jesus Christ the true servant . (*ebed*) says constantly: "The Son of Man must suffer and be killed" (Matt. 16:21). Peter's avowal that this should not happen (16:22) draws the

Lord's most severe rebuke that it is no less than a Satanic temptation: "Get thee behind me, Satan" (16:23). If our diakonia today becomes too comfortable, painless, riskless, unopposed, we will need to check whether we have fallen into the great temptation.

It is in the same context that St Paul speaks to the Corinthians about his own credentials as an ambassador of God. Those credentials are threefold:

- a) constant suffering, affliction and humiliation;
- b) total openness to all in unhypocritical love;
- c) the capacity to take acceptance and rejection, approval and disapproval, with the same equanimity and rejoicing.

When I think of the church's diakonia in my own country, I find this rarely to be the case. Our credentials as a Suffering Servant in India are highly defective. Not only the official church, but even the action groups do not produce these credentials. Even Mother Teresa, who is a tremendously successful Christian deacon, ambassador and servant to the poor, can hardly produce the credentials which St. Paul is talking about.

On the other hand there has been at least one suffering servant, with these credentials, whom I have encountered in India, in my own life-time. But Mahatma Gandhi was not a baptized or believing Christian. He came to the people as a suffering servant of God, with all the three credentials. He walked into the village of Noakhali, where Hindus and Muslims were shooting and stabbing each other, in 1947. Clad in a loincloth, without sleep and without eating, with just the old man's walking stick in his hand, this frail and fragile servant walked into Muslim homes and Hindu homes, saying to the Muslims: "I am a Hindu; kill me if you want to kill a Hindu, but do not kill others." To the Hindu household, brimming with the same passionate and murderous hatred as the Muslim household, Gandhi walked in and said: "I am a friend of the Muslims; kill me first, but do not kill others."

The fact that he succeeded in Noakhali shows only the power of love. The fact that he was shot down by a Hindu at a joint prayer meeting of people of all religions confirms the truth that love does not always succeed, but that the true vocation of the Suffering Servant is to love to the point of laying down one's life for others.

Christians, I must say to the shame of my own community in India, should have seen, but did not acknowledge, their Lord as Suffering Servant, in this exceptionally free and dedicated “non-Christian”, who held to the truth as his breast-plate and manifested the love of God in laying down his life that others may live.

Draw what lessons you can from this episode of a man of another faith fulfilling the role of the Suffering Servant in our time. I cannot compare a Camillo Torres or an Albert Schweitzer or a Livingstone with Gandhi. They too suffered in serving, but their credentials seem to me to have been incomplete.

The royal priesthood

So, put away all evil and all deceit, all hypocrisy and malice, and all slandering; be like just born babies, desiring only the unadulterated spiritual milk, in order that by it you may grow to the maturity of salvation. You have tasted the Lord, that he is good.

To him approach; he is the living rock, rejected and set aside by human beings, but elect and precious in God's sight; and yourselves as living bricks, be built up (oikodomeisthe) as a spiritual temple (oikos pneumatikos), for the holy priestly ministry of offering up the spiritual sacrifices, pleasing to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in holy scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion an elect rock. A cornerstone that is precious indeed. And one who believes and abides in that rock shall never have occasion to be ashamed.”

To you who believe the rock is honourable; for the unbeliever; it is a stone thrown away by the builders; this same rock has now become the head cornerstone; a stone that others step on and stumble. They stumble because they do not believe in the word; that is their destiny.

But you are the elect people, the king's priesthood, the holy nation, the people for possession by God, whose job it is to proclaim abroad the heroic acts of

the One who called you out of darkness into his wondrous light. Once you were no people, now you are the people of God; once outside the pale of mercy, but now the recipients of God's mercy (1 Pet. 2:1-10).

We come now to meditate on the Royal Priesthood, based on 2 Peter 1-10, and its background in the Old Testament, Exodus 19:5-6:

“Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be a special people for me among all the peoples of the world. They all belong to me; the whole earth is mine. But you, Israel, shall be to me a priest-kingdom (*mamleketh-kohanim*) and a holy nation (*goy-qadosh*).”

This vocation of Israel was never fully understood by Israel. Neither do we, the Christians of the world, who have inherited the vocation of Israel, fully comprehend its meaning and scope.

All peoples and nations belong to the Lord, the Israel of Moses and the Egypt of the Pharaohs, the Assyrians and the Chaldeans from whom Abraham came, the hundreds of nations in the United Nations and those outside it like Switzerland. In the time of the calling of Israel, there were probably thousands of nations and peoples. From among these thousands of peoples or *goyim*, Yahweh calls one nation, and that too a slave nation without a king or an address, without even an organized structure of cohesion, to be a special nation, a consecrated people, a *goy-qadosh*, to be a priest-kingdom, a *mamleketh-kohanim*, a *basileon hierateuma*, *ethnos hagion*, a holy people totally consecrated to God.

A special nation consecrated for what? - to be a priest-nation on behalf of whom? Israel was chosen from a community of nations to be the priest of that community of nations, i.e. on behalf of all the nations of the earth - to be the light of the nations - to stand on behalf of the nations before God as their priest, and to bring the light of God to the nations, so that the nations may walk in that light.

Hebrews 5:Iff. defines the function of a priest:

“For every archpriest taken from among human beings is appointed to stand before God on behalf of those human beings, in order to offer gifts and sacrifices for their sins, dealing patiently and gently with the ignorant and the deceived, fully aware that he himself is fallible and weak; for he has the obligation to offer sacrifices for the sins not only of the people, but also for his own sins. He does not take upon himself somehow the honour of a priest, but has to be called by God himself, as for example Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself to become an Archpriest; but rather it was He who said to him: “My Son you are. Today I have given birth to you” (Ps. 2:7), and elsewhere: “You are a priest for ever, belonging to the order of Melchisedek” (Ps. 110:4).

The author of Hebrews goes on to say that Christ became an archpriest by suffering, by loud cries and tears. The Suffering Servant, the *ebed-Yahweh* is also the high priest of Yahweh. Although he was a Son, yet he “learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

The notion of this royal priesthood was not fully assimilated by the early church, perhaps due to the peculiar social conditions in which it operated. Yet some elements it did incorporate in their liturgical symbolism. The eucharist liturgy embodies some of these concepts. It is an offering on behalf of the whole creation, not just on behalf of the church.

Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 split this “a priestly kingdom” into two separate notions - priests *and* a kingdom.

To him who loves us and has released us from our sins by his own blood, and has made us a kingdom, priests to God his Father, to him be glory and power for ages of ages (Rev. 1:5-7).

“And they sing a new song, saying:
 worthy art thou to take the book
 And to open its seals
 For Thou wast slain
 And by Thy blood

You have bought for God
 From every tribe and tongue
 From every people and nation
 And made them for our God
 A kingdom and priests
 And they shall rule on the earth” (Rev. 5:10).

But the basic idea is there, much more clearly than in the Pauline Corpus or Johannine writings. The book of Hebrews and first Peter have not lost sight of this classic insight that it is the church that has been ransomed from all peoples and nations - not just individual Christians. And they have been ransomed - this is even more important - not for their personal salvation as individual souls, but to save as a priestly kingdom - a new nation, a corporate entity whose main task is to pray and intercede for nations and peoples, offering up continually the sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving and intercession on their behalf.

Anti-clericalism was an essential thrust of the Protestant Reformation, justified perhaps by the domineering position of the medieval European clergy in economics and politics, in intellectual life and in culture as well. But that uncritical anti-clericalism has distorted Protestant understanding of the scriptures, especially of the Old Testament. The tendency has been to see the prophetic as the normative element in the Old Testament, and by virtue of another distortion, the prophetic understood in terms of preaching (Gospel, *Verkündigung*) as normative for understanding the New Testament.

Anti-clericalism should not blind us to some very simple facts in the Old and the New Testaments:

1. In the original brief description of Israel’s commission, i.e. Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments are immediately followed by the command to build altars for sacrifice: “You shall make an altar of earth for me, and you shall sacrifice on it your fire-offerings and your peace-offerings... in every place.”

2. Before the Ten Commandments, and the commandments on altars and tabernacles, the succinct characterization of the people of God (in this case, Israel) is not in terms of their prophetic or preaching vocation to the world, but their vocation to be a priestly kingdom, a

holy nation standing as a priest in the presence of God, interceding on behalf of the whole earth.

3. The revelation given to Moses on Mt Sinai did include more than the Ten Commandments. Yahweh also revealed to him the pattern of the tabernacle that was to be built. In Exodus 24, Moses built an altar below Mt Sinai before going up to receive the two tablets with the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 25 the first thing Yahweh says to Moses is that the people should make an offering, a sacrifice (*Therumah*), to Yahweh of all that is needed to build and decorate the tabernacle of God's presence: "Let them make for me a holy place (*miqdosh*) that I may dwell in their midst (*shakanti betokem*) - a holy place according to the plan I am going to reveal to you" (Ex. 25:8-9).

Protestantism, with its basic prophetic-preaching emphasis, stands to gain a great deal if only its scholars would pay more attention to the centrality of the Tabernacle/Temple and Priest/ Sacrifice, in the Old Testament, as well as in Christ's teaching about his own mission. Here is where Faith and Order in particular, and the World Council as a whole, have a special task cut out for them, if they want to be faithful to Christ's great mission on behalf of the whole of humanity. To preach to the world is one thing, but if that preaching were to have some real power, it must come from a community deeply rooted in the mystery of the tabernacle, the presence of the Christian community not only as the people of God, but also as participating in Christ as High Priest of the world, the community of faith as Christ's body sharing in this earthly reality of a priestly kingdom.

Any kingdom of God studies we will undertake in the near future, in connection with social ethics or Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation will have to see a major aspect at least of this kingdom of God in the notion of the priestly kingdom, offering up eucharistic sacrifices to God on behalf of all nations.

In Christ's own self-understanding the Jerusalem Temple occupies a central point. The cleansing of the Temple, "my Father's House", is symbolic of the cleansing of a new people to be the Temple of God. It is this same "my Father's House" which, if destroyed, God

would rebuild again another, one “not made with hands”, in which Christ prepares abiding places for his disciples - the “my Father’s House” in which there are many mansions.

The Temple-Cult-Priesthood-Sacrifice aspect, despised by Rationalism and Enlightenment, and therefore by European biblical scholarship, will have to find its place again at the centre of WCC studies, especially Faith and Order, Church and Society, and World Mission, if the WCC is to pass beyond being a bourgeois, Protestant, Enlightenment organization of vintage European culture and have real appeal for not only the Orthodox, but also for the broad masses of Christians in all lands who are not yet completely brainwashed by the European Enlightenment.

A kingdom of priests witnessing to the kingdom of God, a priestly nation standing as priest for the nations - this is a more appropriate self-understanding for the Christian church in the world than the present ideas of proclamation and mission.

Conclusion

The royal priesthood or priestly kingdom is a very rich idea indeed. The whole work of the WCC may be resumed under a single phrase - *oikodome* or upbuilding for the royal priesthood. If the church in the world is not to belong to any particular nation or culture or religion, but is to become a genuinely integrated nation chosen from all nations and located in all nations, then we must overcome the ideas of mission born in Charlemagne’s Christendom and the Medici papacy - ideas which came to be effective in Protestantism only with the rise of the North European imperial expansion. The WCC’s task, it seems to me, is clear. It is not for itself to become the structure for the unity of world church, nor to create the structure which would unite all churches. Its task is to become a central coordinating body to make sure that the church in each nation is built up and equipped to fulfill its function as the local unit, local manifestation, of the only holy nation and royal priesthood that is the church of Jesus Christ, and to keep each local church aware of the fact that its being is not defined by the bounds of the nation in which it is located, but by its being an integral part and local manifestation of the fullness of the one holy nation and royal priesthood of all nations and all ages.

It is that great mystery of the church's unity with Christ and his eternal sacrifice on the one hand, and with the Christian churches and persons of all nations and all ages that is time and again enacted in the eucharistic act of the church. Once our constituency and leadership grasp this deeper sense in which the eucharist is not only the enactment of Christian truth, but also the source-spring of all Christian activity in the world, the WCC will have a new lease on its life. For then the royal priesthood and priestly kingdom will begin to become a reality once again in the churches - the priestly task of interceding and sacrificing on behalf of the nation and the kingly task of laying down one's life that others may live - the way Christ the king showed us on the cross.

Christ's Ministry to the World

The understanding of the nature of the Christian church, its ministry and sacraments, can be said to constitute the major area of disagreement between the three main traditions of Christianity in the world today, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. The ecumenical dialogue has revealed large areas of agreement. The Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry study (BEM) sponsored by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches is as yet uncompleted. It has resulted in a striking consensus on a basic study document (the Lima document) to serve as a starting point for the discussion, and has been received with approbation in many churches. There have been reservations in that approbation, but the document has already served to foster a new discussion.

The nature of the church

What is the church? That question is still answered in radically different ways by different schools of Christian thought. It is possible to conceive it as an institution or as a voluntary organization of Christian believers. So conceived, a sociological approach may bring out several phenomenological features of the churches as they exist today. But our question is theological, and therefore the answer may not conform to the sociological phenomenon observed by us. The sociological features would of course provide a challenge to the theological answer given by the various traditions. Explanation will need to be provided where the sociological reality differs from the theological conception. We cannot here attempt that. My purpose is to seek to answer the theological question in a way that could help the formulation of the church's ministry as it ought to be today.

Christ's own teaching

The church was only very briefly mentioned by Christ himself. He left no elaborate instructions as to what its ministry ought to be, or about how it is to be governed. What Christ said, however, as reported by the Gospel according to St Matthew (no other gospel

mentions it directly) is full of meaning, and it seems best to start there. Matthew's use of the word *ekklesia* in 16:18 is the key; his further use of it in 18:17 may be safely set aside as referring to the Jewish *kahal*.

“He (Christ) says to them (the apostles): And you, who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered and said: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus said to him in reply: Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Yona, for flesh and blood did not reveal (this) to you, but my Father who is in the heavenlies. And I say to you that you are *Petros* (rock), and upon this rock I will build (*oikodomeso mou*) the church for myself; and the gates of Hades shall not resist it. I will give you (singular) the keys (plural) of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind (as obligatory) on earth shall be bound in the heavenlies, and whatever you unbind on earth shall be unbound in the heavenlies” (Matt. 16:15-19).

Many exegetical questions arise from these words. We shall not be able to answer all of them here. The most controversial of these questions would be whether this power was given to Peter alone, or to all the apostles together, or to the whole church. Similarly the second controversial question is whether the apostle Peter forms by himself the foundation of the church, or whether the foundation is Christ (see e.g. Rom. 15:20-21; 1 Cor. 3:11; especially Peter's own testimony in 1 Pet. 2:3-10). The Eastern Orthodox Church teaches that it is to the whole church that the power of the keys has been given; the keys are symbols of the authority to unbind and release people from the power of sin and death and also to initiate into the kingdom of God.

We are more concerned here with the task of the church, the purpose for which it was founded by Christ. Its function is already indicated in the words of our Lord: it is to lay siege to Hades, which is the kingdom of sin and death. As the church proceeds to the attack, the gates of Hades, however powerful, shall not prevail against the church's onslaught. The gates will give way, so that the prisoners of sin and death can be released and let out.

If there are two keys of the kingdom, the first one is to open the gates of Hades and the second to open the gates of the kingdom of God. The first one is the power to forgive sins and to give life; the second is to make people initiates of the kingdom, children of God, knowing and committed to God's purposes.

If these are the two purposes of the church, if these are the two things which the incarnate Christ accomplishes, then the church's ministry is to participate in Christ's ministry to the world. The church has no ministry of its own except to participate in Christ's ministry. This point, however, needs to be further reflected upon. Christ's ministry is wider and ranges farther than the ministry of the church. The church participates in that ministry, but has no monopoly of it. Theoretically the two should be identical, since the church is Christ's body. In fact, however, this eschatological identity of Christ and his church remains only partially fulfilled. The Holy Spirit is still guiding the church into all truth, and therefore into full obedience. In the highpriestly prayer of John 17, Christ prays:

“And now no longer am I in the world, (i.e., as incarnate), but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Father most holy, maintain them in that name of Yours which You have granted me, in order that they may be one even as we are” (John 17:11).

In other words, the capacity of the church to participate in Christ's ministry is proportional to the bearing of God's holy name, which means being Godlike as Jesus Christ was. Only as the church approximates Christ's Personality will it become truly one and fully participant in Christ's ministry. The unity of the church is a primary aspect of that personality, and division in the church becomes a denial of Christlikeness. Christ was and is one in his unity with the Father. The church also has to become one in itself, with Christ, in union with the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit. That is the eschatological nature of the church. Our participation as church in Christ's ministry is conditional on our free fulfilment of that eschatological nature.

Christ's prayer continues:

“Not regarding these alone do I request, but also regarding those believing in me through their words, so

that all may be one, as You, Father, are in me and I in you, so that they also may be (one) in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent me” (John 17: 20-21).

It is only in unity with the Father in Christ through the Holy Spirit that the church can fulfill its ministry. It is this unity with the Triune God and in the Triune God that makes possible genuine unity of the church and therefore the fulfilment of the ministry of the church. Disunity is a violation of the true nature of the church, an infringement of the church’s eschatological nature, of its conforming to the nature of Christ. The failure of love leads to disunity, for God is love and the church has to reflect that nature. It is love that the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts; without love, there is neither church nor ministry. Failure to love lies at the root of the failure in the church’s ministry. Where there is no love, the Spirit of God is not at work; the church may work all day and all night, and yet it may catch nothing (John 21:3). Sociologically it may be growing, in numbers, wealth and institutions; but it is all hay and stubble that the fire will destroy.

Alas, the church’s ministry is too often measured in terms of activism and institutionalism. Actions, words and institutions are legitimate instruments of the church’s ministry. But they should spring from love, for God is love. This is where the sociological method may be inadequate for measuring the successes and failures of the church’s ministry. God’s love was what Christ manifested in his incarnate ministry. The church’s ministry is to continue that manifestation.

According to the Johannine account the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles by the Resurrected Christ for the church’s ministry:

“So, the disciples, seeing the Lord, were filled with joy. So, Jesus says to them again: Peace to you. As the Father has delegated me, so send I you. And saying this, he breathed on them, and says to them: Receive the Holy Spirit. If you remit anyone’s sins, remitted they shall be for them; and if anyone’s sins you enforce, enforced they shall be” (John 20:20-23).

The Church's apostolic ministry is thus a continuation of Christ's ministry, to be fulfilled in union with him by the Holy Spirit. Its Christological and pneumatological aspects define its content, and to these we turn now.

Christ's ministry and ours

In the interest of brevity we will not go into the details of Christ's threefold ministry, as the High Priest who is the eternal archetype of all priesthood, as the prophet who brings the fullness of God's word to us, and as the Shepherd-king who sits eternally on the throne of David. We will only seek to sketch the outline of the three aspects, the priestly, the prophetic and the shepherdly. We should warn, however, that under-playing any of the three aspects would lead to a distorted understanding of Christ's ministry as well as ours. The temptation can be very strong indeed.

The priestly ministry

The fundamental nature of Christ's priestly ministry is dealt with in detail in the Epistle to the Hebrews; it may be distasteful to the modern rational mind, but should not on that account be despised or ignored. Even in our interpretation of the Old Testament we succumb too often to this temptation when we see the prophetic as central and the cultic or priestly as peripheral. On Mount Sinai, Moses was given more than the two tablets of the Law. He was shown also the design for the tabernacle (Ex. 35:4ff.) The whole book of Leviticus is full of rich symbolism about the cultic observances enjoined by Yahweh. It is the most tragic thing about modern rationality that it has lost all sensitivity to ritual and worship, wherein truths much deeper than the discursive are signified.

Jesus Christ did not bequeath to us any writings of his own; but he gave us the eucharist, wherein the heart of the Christian ministry is communicated to us. The eucharistic act is the central and most fundamental aspect of the ministry of the church, and the neglect of it for the sake of greater emphasis on preaching and witnessing has been a tragic distortion in the life of the church.

Jesus Christ gave himself in sacrifice to the Father, once for all,

on the cross of Calvary. He rose again, victor over sin and death. That sacrifice and that victory are what we celebrate in the eucharist. But we do not do so in any individualistic way. We do it as the community of the Spirit, as Christ's body. In that act we are united with Christ and are conformed to Christ. United with him, we offer ourselves to God as a community, in trusting sacrifice. In the eucharist, Christ gives us his own body and blood so that we may be sustained by it and grow to be Christlike. God entrusts God's self to us so that we may truly become a God-bearing community. It is this union with God that constitutes the foundation of the Christian ministry and is itself the most important part of our ministry, since without it our ministry cannot be Christian ministry.

A priest is always one who stands before God on behalf of others, interceding for them, offering their sacrifices. Jesus Christ is the one and only High Priest, the archetype of all priesthood. He did not offer the sacrifice of himself for his own sake, but for the sake of the world, to reconcile the world to God. In our eucharistic ministry or Christian priestly ministry, we can only participate in Christ's ministry, by offering ourselves to God on behalf of the whole creation and on behalf of the whole of humanity. It is this aspect of the eucharist that often gets neglected, even in those traditions like the Catholic and the Orthodox where the eucharist is still acknowledged as central. The whole church, participating in Christ's priesthood, offers itself on behalf of the whole world, not just on behalf of itself.

This priestly ministry does not belong to the ordained clergy alone. At baptism all Christians were initiated into the Christic high-priesthood. All baptized Christians, clergy and laity, men and women, and also children, participate fully and without reservation in Christ's priesthood, as members of his body, the church. The eucharistic act is an act of the whole church, in Christ, by the Holy Spirit. And by the whole church we should understand not only all baptized Christians living on earth now, but also the departed faithful, who by baptism were united with Christ and do not fall off from that union at death. Each local church has to be aware of this larger dimension of the church in its priestly ministry. In offering ourselves again and again in the eucharist, we keep in mind not only the whole church in space,

but also the whole church in time. To be united with Christ means also to be united with the whole body of Christ in space and time. Even in the older traditions which symbolically express this larger dimension by commemorating the departed, this awareness has to be strengthened by good teaching, because our tendency is to be aware only of the local congregation in worship.

Any programme for the renewal of the church's ministry in our time should stress not only this catholic dimension of it, but also its vicarious or intercessory dimension. The church does not worship in order to gain something for itself. It is like Christ's self-offering, a sacrifice on behalf of others. Others include not only the whole of humanity, but also the whole created order, both organic and inorganic. As we take the fruit of the vine and the bread of powdered grain, both mixed with water, and lift it up to God, we are offering the whole creation which sustains us and supports us in life.

The ministry of prayer and intercession is part of the church's priestly ministry in Christ, who continues to this day in interceding for us with the Father (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34). The Holy Spirit is also continuously interceding, through groans expressing our unspoken aspirations (Rom. 8:26, 27). Intercession for non-believers, for the coming of more justice into societies, for peace in the world, and for the biosphere that sustains our life, for summer and winter in due time, for science and technology becoming true instruments of humanity's emancipation and not of exploitation and oppression, for our political, economic, social and cultural institutions, for the weak and the poor, for the oppressed and the under-privileged, for the sick and the handicapped, for the lepers and victims of AIDS - all these are integral parts of our priestly ministry. And intercession has to spring from love, from understanding and compassion, from genuine sympathy and identification. The church thus has to become a source-spring of blessing and love for all, not of judgment and condemnation, not of hatred and cursing. The recovery of this ministry of prayer and intercession will be a major element in the renewal of the church's ministry.

The prophetic ministry

The churches of the Reformation have been stronger in emphasizing this prophetic ministry. But a fuller understanding of its nature can help all of us in all the traditions to seek a more comprehensive renewal of this ministry. There are two aspects of the church's prophetic ministry which have to be held in balance with each other - one addressed to the church and the other to humanity or the state or other institutions in society.

The New Testament speaks of the church as being founded on the "apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20) and the apostle Paul lists among the gifts of the Spirit given to the church first apostles, then prophets (1 Cor. 12:28, 29; Eph. 3:5, 4:11, etc.). These references are certainly not to Old Testament prophets, but to an office in the early church which seems to have become subsequently defunct. In 1 Corinthians 12-14 there is an extended discussion on the comparative merits of speaking in tongues and prophesying both of which are among the gifts of the Spirit.

The New Testament prophet speaks to the church for its edification (1 Cor. 14:3-5). The purpose of New Testament prophecy is to build up the body of Christ through words of teaching inspired directly by the Holy Spirit. The prophet in the New Testament church does not speak to the state or to the outside world in order to criticize their activities. There was indeed much to criticize in the way the Roman imperial administration functioned, but the New Testament prophet was concerned about building up the life of the church. This ministry of *oikodome* of the church needs to get special attention if the ministry of the church is to be renewed today. We need to face the cynical comment of non-Christians that Christians will do better if they cut down on the propaganda of mission and spent more energy on the product of the gospel, namely the quality of Christian life. We must refrain from an extended discussion of this concept of *oikodome* of the church, which is primary and basic, both for worship or priestly ministry and for the mission or shepherdly ministry to the world.

A short formula for the renewal of the Christian ministry would be: "oikodome for the royal priesthood." Oikodome literally means

house-building. Even this task of building up the body of Christ is a common task of all Christians, not just of the clergy. The ordained clergy have of course a special responsibility in this regard, but no monopoly of it. In fact they can accomplish their task only with the full cooperation of all believers. The point to note here is that building up the body of Christ is not an end in itself, but oriented to the royal priesthood, to which all Christians are called. It is to all Christians that the apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 2:9:

“But you (plural) are an elect race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, in order that you may declare the mighty acts of him who called you out from (the domain of) darkness into his marvellous light.”

This kingly priesthood refers back to the calling of the Old Israel in Exodus 19:5-6:

“And if surely you will listen to my voice and will keep my covenant, you will become for me a cherished people above all the nations of the earth, for the whole earth is mine; and you shall become for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

It is clear from the context in the Old Testament that the Old Israel was not called for its own sake, but to serve as a priestly nation in the community of nations, a nation that constantly stands before God offering the sacrifice of the nations and interceding for them. Israel forgot this vicarious nature of its calling most of the time. The Christian church falls prey to the same temptation much too often. It is the community of nations for which the church is the priest, in union with Christ. Forget that, and the Christian ministry is already betrayed. In the Old Testament the Hebrew expression *mamleket kohanim* meant simply a kingdom or nation among nations or kingdoms, a kingdom especially chosen to be the priest for the community of nations. In the New Testament the Greek expression *basilikon hierateuma* takes on a new significance. The Book of Revelation says that our Redeemer “has made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father” (1:6) or more explicitly, in 5:9-10:

“Worthy art Thou to receive the Book and to open its seals for Thou wast slain, and by Thy blood has purchased for God out of every tribe and people and nation, and made them for our God a Kingdom and priests, and they shall reign upon the earth.”

The same idea is repeated in Rev. 20:6 where also priesthood and reigning kingship are associated. It is to this kingly or royal ministry that we shall now turn.

The ministry of the king-shepherd

What could a kingly ministry for the church mean in our time? It is fascinating to observe how the institution of kingship is fast passing out of history. It is particularly noteworthy for us in India. Till 1947 we had 526 maharajahs and rajahs. And almost overnight, there was not even one. And the same goes for the people of Israel. For centuries they had no king. Then in the days of Samuel, the people insisted on having a king like the other nations. Yahweh told them that they needed no king, since Yahweh himself was the King of Israel. The people kept on insisting (1 Sam. 8:1-20), and with dire warnings Yahweh gave them their first king, Saul. The kingship in Israel ended with the Babylonian captivity, but the people were promised a new kind of king, the messianic Son of David, the good king. When Pilate asked Jesus whether he was a king, the reply was ambiguous. Christ himself preferred the title Shepherd or Pastor. Moses was a shepherd, David was a shepherd. Christ himself does not say, in John 10, that he is the good king. Instead he says: I am the Good Shepherd, the Bon Pastor.

Jesus did not deny the title “King of the Jews.” But where is that title inscribed? On the top of the cross of Calvary. It is from the cross that Jesus rules, with power over sin and death, but also over all creation.

In John 10, Jesus himself gives the definition of the good king or the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. This is the church’s ruling power over the world, the power to lay down our lives for the sake of humanity and the world. This is our true jurisdiction, our true magisterium, as those united with the crucified One.

We shall here briefly enumerate the three qualities of the Good Shepherd as Jesus outlines them in John 10. These are specifications of Christ's ministry to the world and therefore of ours in union with him.

First, the Good Shepherd knows his sheep intimately by name. The sheep trust him, and when he calls they respond, for they recognize his voice (John 10:3). This is the relationship that the church also should have towards the whole world, a relationship of intimate mutual knowledge and a complete trust in the church. Alas, we have made such a mess of that relationship by our dominance and self-regarding that the world no longer trusts us, nor responds to our voice. The recovery of this trust will come only when the church becomes prepared to lay down its concern about itself and genuinely and sincerely cares for the world. Central to the renewal of the ministry of the church is the winning back of this relationship of trust, which will not happen through any amount of preaching and professing a love which does not really exist. When the church hates any group of people, be they people of other religions or other ideologies, the church loses its credentials as Good Shepherd.

Neither anti-Americanism nor anti-communism goes with the character of the church.

The second quality of the Good Shepherd is that at his behest, the doors of the sheepfold are opened and the sheep are able to go out and find pasture. The shepherd does not bring the sheep's food into the sheepfold, but leads them out and goes before them to where the green pastures and the still waters are. This is the church's most important ministry - to open doors that confine people in oppression, injustice and exploitation, to lead the nations to where they can find the just societies of green pastures and the still waters of peaceful and secure national and international situations. The church does not hand out justice and peace to the nations. It is from a relationship of trust that the church should be able to lead the nations away from their confinement in injustice, war, oppression, exploitation, terrorism, and environmental decay.

The third aspect of the ministry of the Good Shepherd is perhaps

the most characteristic of Christ, and possibly the most uncharacteristic of the Christian church. As the sheep move towards freedom and justice, the wolves come. And like hire-lings, when we see the wolf coming we leave the sheep and flee (John 10:12). The Good Shepherd, on the other hand, struggles with the wolves and if necessary lays down his life for the sheep. Oppose openly and effectively the oppressive structures of the world, and the wolves will advance on us to tear us apart and snatch the sheep away. I will not try to identify or even exemplify the wolves today. But they are there for all to see, aggressive, sly and cruel, ravenous with greed. If the church takes up a fight with the wolves it will lose much of its privilege and power, financial and otherwise. So we keep silent, hypocritically leaving it to God to bring justice and peace in the world.

Conclusion

We have dealt with, in bare and inadequate outline, the threefold ministry of Christ and therefore of the church, as high priest of the world, as prophet of the world and as shepherd of the world. *Oikodome*, or building up of the body of Christ, is in order that the church may be able to fulfill this threefold ministry to the world. The ordained ministry has to be understood both as the agency commissioned by God to help the church fulfill this ministry and as a visible, sacramental, conciliar presence of Christ the High Priest, Prophet and Shepherd in the community of the Spirit.

Both the ministry of the whole church and the special ministry of the specially ordained, have to be understood both charismatically and pneumatologically, as well as in concrete historical and existential terms.

Healing A Holistic Approach

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

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FOREWORD

My detailed interest in systems of healing is at least thirty years old. I am convinced that the present hegemony of western medicine is not in the best interests of humanity. It seems incapable of meeting the needs of 6000 million people. At present it hardly reaches a fifth of the world's population.

A disproportionately large amount of public funds is now devoted to Western medical education and Western style medical institutions. While the Western system has much to its credit, recent developments have made it unaffordable for most people, unacceptable in terms of the damage it does, and undesirable in terms of its over-mechanisation and over-technologisation of both diagnosis and therapy. Only a radically reformed Western Medicine can hope to have a significantly large place in the future in the world-wide exercise of the healing ministry and health care.

Wholistic healing is more absent in western systems than in traditional systems. But the latter too are often tempted to imitate the practices of western medicine, losing thereby its traditional holistic concern.

The present work is a compilation of my occasional writings on this concern through the last thirty years. It is offered as a possible stimulus to further reflection and a plea for a new type of health care in which the traditional systems and Homoeopathy play a larger role in caring for the health of humanity. It is also an invitation to a new type of multi-system healing centres where Allopathy is only one of the therapies, along with revived traditional systems, to bring less harmful and more affordable healing to all people.

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

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The Whole Heals

The idea of wholeness can be grasped at various levels, e.g. in concepts like the whole orange, the whole school, the whole of humanity, the whole body, the whole created order, and so on. People understand the *whole* as distinct from the part.

Understood thus, wholistic healing may mean simply treating the whole body rather than just one malfunctioning organ. For others it may mean treating the body and the mind together as constituting a single whole. For yet others wholistic healing may mean taking the social relations of the patient into account, so that the human individual is understood in terms of a unit in a social system, relations within that system being decisive for health or sickness.

To many physicians and surgeons, wholistic healing means something vague, involving the new fads of community medicine and public health, health delivery and preventive medicine on the one hand, and on the other adding on to western Allopathic Medicine, a little of Yoga, Acupuncture, Ayurveda, Tibetan medicine and other therapies regarded as “unscientific.”

My purpose is to suggest a more holistic approach, not only to healing, but also to our understanding of the whole as such.

1. What is healing and health?

The Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches, more than a decade ago recognized the fact that “the causes of ill health have a wide range which include a hostile environment, malnutrition, poverty, ignorance, social deprivation and overly large families.”¹

The C.M.C. was set up in 1968, and had been preceded by the first Tuebingen Consultation of 1964 (held at Makerere University in Uganda); the World Council of Churches later published the report of that consultation: *The Healing Church*, 1965, ed. Frank Davey. The most important single insight of this consultation was that the medical team could not by itself heal; human relations in the community were equally an agent of health and healing: “we know

that the healing of bodies apart from life in this fellowship (i.e. the corporate life of the people of God) is as incomplete as launching ships in dry harbours, or sowing seed on stony soil.”²

It also hit upon the fact that Latin *salus* meant both salvation and healing. The decision was made to explore this connection in greater detail at the Second Tuebingen Consultation (September 1967), which in turn led to the constituting of the Christian Medical Commission. The main achievement of this Commission has been the shift of focus from the hospital to the community, and therefore the emergence of the concept of “comprehensive health care” for a community. The World Health Organisation also popularized this concept and it is now widely accepted but nowhere fully practised; simply because comprehensive health care demands a just, and peaceful society and an ecologically healthy environment; and these cannot be achieved overnight.

The Commission has also made an attempt to newly conceptualize health and healing, despite ‘Bishop David Jenkins’ warning, that:

“We cannot therefore separate our attitude to health from our attitude to life. This is why you cannot, and, indeed, must not define health. Like life it is an open and as yet undefinable, because as yet unfulfilled, possibility.”³

Bishop Jenkins himself, nevertheless, solemnly went on to define health: “Health is what we enjoy when we are on our way to that which God is preparing for us to enjoy and when we are collaborating with Him in that preparation.”

What then is healing and health if health is life itself? What is life? In dealing with that question, we enter into the very depths of the meaning of the whole and of our functioning as human beings within that whole. Both physics and biology have made such giant strides in our century, and we need to examine our conceptions of reality in the light of what these sciences reveal. For the newest insights about wholeness have come from these scientific developments, rather than from any abstract philosophical reasoning.

2. Reality in Modern Physics

The crisis within medical science is only one aspect of the crisis within modern science as a whole, especially in microphysics and microbiology and in the philosophy of science.

And the crisis of modern science rises from the methodology of that science, which was developed arbitrarily - within a framework on Newtonian Mechanics, with causality arbitrarily chosen as the sole principle of explanation, arbitrarily prohibiting teleological explanations (machines have only causal chains, but no purpose of their own, supposedly), and banking on repeatable public experience, or the publicly empirical as criterion of validation; true scientific knowledge was wrongly assumed to be unrelated to the mind of the individual observer, and universal-everlasting without any historical or social-cultural conditioning.

Even in Quantum Theory the attempt has been to explain reality in these mechanical terms. The Copenhagen interpretation modifies the classical mechanical conception of causality by introducing the concept of “statistical causality.” Niels Bohr recognized that light quanta cannot be regarded as particles which would act according to the laws of Newtonian mechanics, or laws of bodies moving in space; but he too could describe light only in mechanical terms as “transmission of energy between material bodies at a distance.”⁴

The impossibility of applying classical mechanical explanation to the state of a micro-system at a given moment (and to our knowledge of that state), was already recognized more than 60 years ago at the International Physical Congress (Como, Italy, September 1927). Niels Bohr himself advocated the principle of ‘complementarity’ (over against Heisenberg’s ‘indeterminacy’) as a way to explain quantum phenomena in classical mechanical terms. Einstein was not at Como in September 1927, but in October 1927, at the Fifth Solvay (Institut Internationale de Physique, Solvay, Brussels) Conference, he expressed anxiety that the causal-mechanical explanation was being abandoned by scientists.

But Einstein’s anxiety has not stemmed the tide of skepticism

about science's causal explanations and about its privileged access claim to knowledge. Neo-empiricists like Mary Hesse, Ian Hacking and Nancy Cartwright, are abandoning the old 'naive realism' (the "in science we know reality as it is" line) and opting for a problem-solving pragmatism which evades the ontological issues. Others would probably call themselves post-empiricists rather than neo-empiricists; among these we count Rorty, Bernstein, Putnam, Habermas and so on. They also do not seek to tackle the metaphysical problem, but would opt for a loose pragmatism.⁶

Nature does not fit classical physics; it does not fit ordinary rationality either. That is the verdict of modern physics. Our classical notions of space, time, matter, object, subject, cause, effect and even of rationality itself have suddenly become obsolete though we continue to work with these timeworn concepts.

Fritjof Capra, in his *The Turning Point*⁷ suggests that the new world view of modern physics has moved away from mechanical to something more organic, holistic, and ecological - the universe "as one indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially inter-related and can be understood only as patterns of a cosmic process."⁸

There are no 'things' out there - only 'probability waves.' That is not so easy for us to grasp conceptually. There are no things - only relationships. Things do not exist; they happen. And every little event is influenced by and influences, the whole universe. Causality does not require contiguity. Non-local causality connects the whole universe - the whole time-space continuum.

That is maddening enough-to hear that there is "no out there", "no things", and no mechanical causality. The opposite is what we have been dogmatically taught in the name of science - that there is an objective world out there, that it is composed of "things" arranged in order in space, and that the whole thing is guided by eternal laws of motion, like a machine.

Bergson and Whitehead tried to give us an alternative picture - that the universe is not made up of things arranged in science, but is composed of a series of events in time, constituting a process. They were, as philosophers, more in touch with their contemporary scientific

developments - especially the Special Theory of Relativity, which makes space simply three co-ordinates or dimensions of reality as we experience it, but with an additional fourth dimension or co-ordinate called time. Space and time were thus seen to be no longer absolutes, but merely dimensions of our experience of reality - a reality related to the subjectivity of the observer. Relativity theory also taught us that mass is only another mode of energy; that matter as such is only a form of energy, something full of power and movement, not wholly inert or static. Matter and movement are not two separate realities, as Newton thought.

So far, the Special Theory of Relativity (STR) and Quantum Theory (QT) have not yet been satisfactorily reconciled into a General Theory of Relativity, which would give us a general equation for the whole. The Copenhagen interpretation, more popular among scientists, tries to reconcile the anomalies with the aid of notions like 'statistical causality', 'principle of indeterminacy' and 'complementarity' - in order to bring at least partial order into a bewildering experience of reality.

The other attempt is the "Boot-strap" or "S-matrix" hypothesis advanced by Geoffrey Chew in the 1960's. It is fascinating as an attempt to do the opposite of what the scientific enterprise has been all about. Modern science is founded on the idea that reality is regular, independent of the observer, causally determined and therefore knowable in terms of those regularities and of the principle of causality. The Copenhagen interpretation tries to conserve the foundations of modern science, by drawing limits to indeterminacy and unpredictability by the notion of 'statistical causality', with indeterminacy at the individual level and determinacy-predictability at the statistical level.

The S-Matrix theory on the other hand denies all fundamental constants, laws or equations. There is consistency and coherence within the whole system, but no part of it can have laws and equations which govern it, irrespective of its relation to other parts of the system. This makes the S-matrix hypothesis highly suspect in the view of ardent believers in modern science. Accepting it would mean the denial of traditionally believed notions like the 'laws of nature' on

which the enterprise of modern science is squarely based. But the S-Martix hypothesis does justice to the observed fact that the observer is inescapably part of what is observed, since every observation system includes the observer as an integral part of it.

No matter whether you are Copenhagenist or Boot-strapist, Physics, wherein once determinacy and strict causality were thought to be self-evident and provable, now reveals that neither determinacy nor causality operates at the strict level, and that the laws of Newtonian mechanics are not so universal or “written into nature.”

This has indeed very big implications for the so-called scientific medicine, and its claims to objectivity in diagnosis and therapy. Before we draw out these implications we should take a quick look at the current situation in Biology.

3. The Picture in Modern Biology

There was a time when biology and even the social sciences used to emulate the mechanical-causal explanations of physics. The theory of evolution was such an effort to explain life in terms of mechanical causality. Darwin's effort in 1859 was to explain the process of biological evolution as a causal chain in which effect follows cause without a break. “Natural selection” based on “the struggle for survival” and on “the survival of the fittest” became the principle of causal explanation for the origin of the species.

Today biologists are generally reluctant to accept ‘natural selection’ as an adequate explanatory principle for the theory of evolution as such. For one thing we have more information on the genetic factor and the possibilities of genetic mutation, than Darwin and his generation had. The distinction between Creationism and Evolutionism lies in a basic belief that species are or are not mutable. For Darwin, species mutability was, an article of faith, not empirically demonstrable, and he had to argue rather than demonstrate his point in *The Origin of Species*. For whatever natural selection may be able to achieve in terms of survival of the fittest, if there is no possibility of mutation, the amoebum must remain an amoebum, a very fit amoebum, but nothing more than an amoebum. The possibility of mutation should

be the key to the evolution of species, if it has happened, not just natural selection. In fact biologists have begun to argue that ‘natural selection’ is not a necessary condition at all for speciation. A new species emerging by genetic-chromosomal mutation is easier to understand than the idea of natural selection leading to the emergence of a new species.⁹ After a species has been formed, natural selection may play its role in the survival of fitter specimens within that species. Darwin did not explain what his title stated.

Population genetics and molecular genetics bring us closer to understanding the evolution of a new species; but we still look for a causal explanation for the individual events of genetic revolution which lead to the emergence of one species from another. Most biologists would regard a combination of selection, heredity and variation as a sufficient causal explanation for genetic revolution.¹⁰ But the variation aspect needs further clarification of how genotype variation by natural selection and inheritance of acquired characteristics can lead to the emergence of a stable new phenotype or the emergence of one species from another.

Many biologists simply assume that trans-specific change is only the cumulative effect of many generations of intra-specific mutation which we can observe. Only since 1980 there has been a wide recognition of a new perspective - that of “punctuated equilibrium.” This view, of which Stevan J. Gould is the best known proponent, argues that evolution was marked by long periods of stasis interspersed or punctuated by sudden bursts of mutation leading to speciation.”¹¹

Paul Thompson offers us the plausible hypothesis that the Theory of Evolution is not a single consistent theory, but a model which incorporates several theories, or rather “a family of inter-acting models.”¹²

The fact of the matter, however, is that the theory as it stands at present seems inadequate to explain a number of factors:

- (a) evolution from simpler towards more and more complex structures;
- (b) evolution of a new species out of an existing one.

(c) the deviation of fossil data from the theoretical picture.

(d) Why evolution stops with humanity and does not create other, superior, species.

In any case the theory of evolution, as we now have it, does not adequately account for the origin of life from non-life, for the special pattern that it has followed, for the emergence of a brain structure and consciousness such as the human, which human ingenuity cannot reproduce.

4. What Heals?

It is a dangerous assumption that we actually understand life in science, that keeps us from using other faculties given to us to understand life sufficiently to be able to deal with it creatively. The scientific understanding of life can help us to complete the picture, but its basic contour escapes the parameters of modern science as they now stand. It is out of a Christian tradition and general observation that I make the following affirmations about life. No claim is made in terms of scientific validity.

1. There is no such thing as ‘nature’; there is only one continuum which includes inorganic matter, life, and consciousness. What is evidently present at the higher levels is already present in an incipient manner or as potential at the lower levels.

2. Life exists in our world only in relation to and dependent upon the two poles of inorganic matter and consciousness i.e. to the whole of existence and never without these; it is an open system which has to draw energy from the inorganic as well as from consciousness.

3. If health is the name for life when it is flourishing, then the healing force is the same as the life-force, and comes from the whole - not from surgical or chemical intervention.

4. The paradigm case for healing is not to be sought in our hospitals and clinics; it is seen in those instances where faith, prayer, touch and word from a caring community have been the major factors in the healing process. Clinical healing is also using the same four factors, though credit may be given only to drugs or surgical intervention.

It is perhaps not wholly correct to say that life is the same as healing. Perhaps we should say that the force that promotes life is the same force which effects healing. In other words life-force and healing power are akin to each other and have the same source.

5. The Four Levels of Reality as We Perceive it

This source is the same source from which the dynamic continuum of reality has its origin and contingent existence. In this continuum we can observe many levels - from our perspective, four levels with four different orders or behaving principles. At the lowest level (again from our perspective) we have what we call *inorganic matter-energy* - i.e. bundles and packets and waves of high potency energy showing itself off in a myriad forms - the rocks, the oceans, the hundred or more elements and their compounds - forces which we see as light and sound, heat and electricity, magneticism and gravity, and the strong and weak forces that hold matter together or make forms of matter-energy interact with each other, including nuclear power. We call this level inorganic. We once thought that the mechanistic Newtonian paradigm fits this level admirably. We are wiser today. We know that what we call inorganic matter behaves in ways past finding out, especially at the sub-atomic level - not as mass in motion as Newton thought.

Continuous with this inorganic level is the organic level or bio-level. We say continuous because the line of demarcation between a crystal or radioactive element on the one hand and a protein molecule or virus on the other is not so absolute or clear. In general terms, however, we know how to distinguish between organic and inorganic. We would posit the distinguishing feature of life as homoeostasis or the capacity to maintain certain internal constants in the face of a wide range of external pressures, e.g. a constant temperature of the body despite a given range of fluctuations in the environmental temperature. The whole group of biological sciences deals with these phenomena we call life.

We should not be too sanguine about the completeness of our present knowledge of this level. We have seen what difference a little discovery about genes and their structure can make in our over-

all perspective. Nor can we quite state the difference between a living being and a corpse. New discoveries are always in order in biology and physics; and we should be quite modest about how much we know.

The third level is where our knowledge is most inadequate - the level of consciousness. Again, there is no clean break between life and consciousness. In fact it seems possible to propose that consciousness exists at the inorganic level also. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain the behaviour of subatomic particles separated from each other and yet behaving in relation to what happens to the other.

In any case, let us say that life has a special kind of consciousness. By consciousness we mean an internal apprehension of external reality and the capacity to make choices in relation to that apprehension. Sickness, we now know, is malfunctioning at all three levels - the chemical or inorganic factors, the biological or organic factors, and the mental or consciousness factors. Medical and surgical therapy usually pays attention to the first and second levels. Today we are moving towards a higher aetiological role for the third level in diagnosis and a larger hiatric role for consciousness factors including psychological process and sociological or communitarian relations.

Consciousness is always so difficult to conceptualize or study 'objectively', since its very nature is subjective. The moment we objectify it, we need a subject other than the object to understand it - another consciousness than the one we are studying. We distort consciousness, which is always subject, when we make it an object. We do understand more about brain and neural processes than we did two decades ago. As in the case of genetics, some dramatic progress has been achieved in neurology also, for example in the function of cell membranes. In both genetics and neurology, however, there are huge gaps in our knowledge of the relation between physico-chemical events and psychic events.

There is a fourth level about which we know even less. We could call it the cosmic level or the transcendent level. This is the one least understood or even conceded by modern science - how the

configuration of the whole affects each part and each event. Attempts have been made to conceptualise this through pseudo-sciences like astrology. Carl Gustav Jung tried to speak about synchronicity as a scientific principle which shows how the micro reflects the macro at any given moment; the Chinese tradition of I-Ching gave him the lead. Karl Pribram and others have sought to make the Jungian concept more precise but have found very little approval from the scientific community as a whole.

Poetry and art are perhaps better able to cope with this level than science. Religion too deals with this level, through myths, symbols and rituals, and sometimes through concepts like *karma*, *punarjanma* (*rebirth*), *the last judgment*, creation, incarnation and redemption.

Looking at the whole, scientists observe certain directions in the developmental process, but modern science is still a prisoner of the dogma of its infancy - the ruling out of all teleology or goal-directedness. Today perceptive scientists speak of “stochastic processes” - i.e. processes in which randomness at one level goes with non-randomness at another, showing overall directedness. We cannot understand the process of the evolution of the life species, the evolution of humanity, or evolution of the human brain as strictly the consequences of chance or randomness.

6. Consciousness and Reality have same structure

One of the most perceptive thinkers and scientists of our time, Gregory Bateson, puts it thus:

“In sum, I shall assume that evolutionary change and somatic change (including learning and thought) are fundamentally similar, that both are stochastic in nature, although surely the ideas (injunctions, descriptive propositions, and so on) on which each process works, are of totally different logical typing from the typing of ideas in the other process.”¹³

What Bateson tells us is that consciousness as process and the world or evolution as process are both stochastic - “two great stochastic systems that are partly in inter-action and partly isolated from each other ... The two fit together into an ongoing bio-sphere that could

not endure if either somatic or genetic change were fundamentally different from what it is. The *unity* of the combined system is *necessary*.”¹⁴

What exactly is the nature of this “unity of the combined system?” Bateson argues that the two systems jointly constituting it - evolutionary change and human bodily change (genetic or learning) are both mental processes. The cornerstone of his argument in the book is his brilliant listing and expounding of the six “Criteria of Mental Process.”¹⁵ They are as follows:

1. *A Mind is an aggregate of interacting parts or components.*
2. *The inter-action between parts of mind is triggered by difference, and difference is a non-substantial phenomenon not located in space and time; difference is related to negentropy and entropy rather than to energy.*
3. *Mental process requires collateral energy.*
4. *Mental process requires circular (or more complex) chains of determination.*
5. *In mental process, the effects of difference are to be regarded as transforms (i.e. coded versions) of events which preceded them. The rules of such transformation must be comparatively stable (i.e. more stable than the content) but are themselves subject to transformation.*
6. *The description and classification of these processes of transformation disclose a hierarchy of logical type immanent in the phenomena.*¹⁶

Bateson’s breath-taking argument is that human thought (consciousness), evolution (world-process), ecology (life-environment), life and learning are possible only in systems which satisfy these criteria and are therefore “mental.”

Greg Bateson is not proclaiming any triumph of idealism over materialism. He is arguing that mental processes are involved both in consciousness and the world, but consciousness and the world are two distinguishable but necessarily interacting systems which form a

necessary unity. This means also that ideas like ‘materialism’ and ‘idealism’ do not make sense, since either of these would pre-suppose the primal or primordial being of either matter or mind. In fact the two have never existed in isolation; the one seems to be systemically integral to the other.

“The unity of the combined system” is still a quasi-mechanical concept. We know what ‘system’ means - a whole in which the parts function in relation to each other and in relation to the whole. The most “objective” systems, the ones we know best, are of our own creation, like computers and other programmed electronic systems. Is there not the possibility that we are making the same mistake in positing the “system” as the paradigm for reality, as Newton did in positing the “machine” as the model for understanding and describing reality? You may answer that a “system” is the most complex, centered reality that we have objective knowledge of, and therefore we cannot but choose it as the best paradigm, since by the very structure of our minds we can understand only through paradigms and concepts.

This insistence that reality must by nature be conceptually graspable and propositionally storable has been a prevailing feature of the west for centuries. And western civilisation is still reluctant to acknowledge the evident fact that reality is not conceptually comprehensible, and that while concepts have an important role in helping us deal with reality, it can be only a partial role, to be supplemented by poetry and art, literature and music, dance and drama, ritual and liturgy, symbols and stories, parables and silence, feasts and fasting, myths and images, the look and the sigh, groans and gestures. With all that, however, we do not comprehend reality as a whole conceptually.

May I at this stage point to the case which is narrated by Dr. Larry Dossey in his *Space, Time and Medicine?*¹⁷ This is the case of a wizened old patient at the Dallas Diagnostic Center, who was wasting away: a panoply of two week’s worth of diagnostic tests failed to reveal any organic or functional defect other than that of wasting away and fast approaching death. Fifty pound weight loss in six months and no clinical possibility of arresting the process. The

doctors confessed to the patient their inability to do anything clinically. The patient responded that he was dying because he had been “hexed.” The doctor, Jim, turned Shaman, and taking a little piece of the patient’s hair and burning it in the eerie blue flame of a lighted methenamine tablet on a metal ashtray in a dark hospital examination room, the patient watching, “de-hexed” him. The patient recovered and was well!

The account is anecdotal; but it is from an eyewitness and silent accomplice, himself a professional physician of high reputation, whom I know personally (i.e. Larry Dossey himself). I see no reason to disbelieve his account. The physician, “Jim”, who performed the ritual of de-hexing, did not believe in magic, nor had done anything of the kind before. Despite his lack of faith in his own magic, it worked.

The whole heals in ways we do not understand. We know from experience that faith, community, ritual, and word are essentials in the healing process.

Life, Consciousness and Healing

Western Medicine is as old as you want to think it is. You can trace it back to Galen (130-200 A.D.) and even to Hippocrates (ca 460-377 B.C.); we have at least inherited writings attributed to them. Asklepius is more difficult to trace as a person,¹⁸ but his institution, the Asklepium is known to history and his cult was introduced at Athens in 420 B.C. The serpent was sacred to Asklepius, and is still the symbol of the medical profession.

Current western medicine likes to think of itself as rooted in the Greek tradition. We have no idea of what all sources the Greeks borrowed from. The Egyptian, the Akkadian and the Sumerian civilisations are possible sources. According to Emperor Ashoka’s (ca 304-232 B.C.) Rock Edicts II and XIII, he sent fully equipped medical missions to five city states of Greece, “for relief of suffering of all creatures, man and beast” in the 3rd century B.C. Thus Greece inherited ancient Indian medicine in some form.

Indian and Chinese Systems of medicine are definitely older than the Greek. The Ayurveda system goes back to the Vedic period, and

we hear about Jivaka, the physician appointed by Emperor Bimbisara to take care of Gautama the Buddha (ca 560-480 B.C.).

In China the Nei-Ching, the classical system of medicine, was codified only in the reign of the Han dynasty (226 B.C. to 220 A.D.); systems which existed before, seem to have left no written remains.

Western medicine as we know it today does not bear much continuity with any of the ancient systems of healing. Healing was art, not science, practiced by a skilled wise man, a learned man in many things - not just in anatomy, pathology, pharmacology and kindred subjects.

Modern Western medicine has evolved from the following major factors, among others:

- (a) The Cartesian (Descartes, 1596-1650) vision of the body as a machine, largely independent of the mind;
- (b) William Harvey's description of the blood circulation system - largely mechanical;
- (c) Louis Pasteur's (1822-1895) discovery of bacteria or microbes as major cause of illness;
- (d) The development of anaesthesia and disinfection, making surgery more successful;
- (e) Development of new diagnostic techniques, e.g. the stethoscope, sphygmomanometer, and later much more sophisticated devices like X-ray, CAT-scanner, and new electronic devices;
- (f) development of molecular and cellular biology, endocrinology, and nutrition theory;
- (g) development of vaccination and other immunization technologies;
- (h) development of antibiotics;
- (i) development of hygiene and sanitation;

The net result of these developments has been, among other things:

- (a) concentration on the disease rather than on the patient;

- (b) focus on naming the ailment (diagnosis) and then on chemical or surgical intervention to counteract the ailment.
- (c) focus on the malfunction of the body as root of disease, without reference to the mind or the social and physical environment, without which the body cannot function.
- (d) shift from personal physician to clinic or hospital as primary healing agent, and the marginalisation of the role of human relations in healing;
- (e) the technologization of healing and the soaring cost of medical care;

Several factors have today combined to a widespread questioning of the very premises on which western medicine is based, in addition to the cost factor mentioned:

- (a) the high incidence of iatrogenic or hospital-induced illness, up to 20% in the U.S.A. of all hospital cases;¹⁹
- (b) the perception that most drugs while treating one set of symptoms, create dangerous side effects in other parts of the body;
- (c) the fact that antibiotics are deleterious to health, since they kill also beneficial bacteria, and besides lead to new strains of bacteria with increased immunity to antibiotics;
- (d) the perception that the present medical care system in many market economy countries helps more the medical practitioners, the manufacturers and traders of pharmaceuticals and the medical insurance companies than the patients;
- (e) The fact that western medicine is based on the mechanistic notions of modern science, notions which have been repudiated by science itself.

The mechanistic conception of the body, and the pathology-pharmacology based on it are quite outdated, though still fashionable. We are desperately in need of a new paradigm that helps to understand the body-mind as a single unit, a sub-system of a cosmic network system.

There is such a new paradigm emerging. Its contours are not yet clear. But an indication can be seen in a paper by Dr. Deepak Chopra of the American Association for Ayurvedic Medicine, Stoneham, Massachusetts, U.S.A. He represents the quasiscientific approach of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his “Vedic Science” or “Maharishi Ayurveda.”

Chopra tries to draw a parallel between quantum relations in the universe and mental phenomena - “that mental events are the subjective equivalent of quantum mechanical events.” He posits that each cell is intelligent and that human intelligence is not like a telephone system with its “exchange” in the brain, but more like a “field” which propagates its influence over a large and even unlimited expanse of space and time, and that the body itself is a web of such fields, rather than molecules organized in space. And every particle of living matter is in touch with every other, so that life as a whole is an intricate cosmic system of interacting fields. “The human body”, says Chopra, “is consciousness first and matter second.”²⁰

However that be - and ordinary science has yet to accept the hypotheses of Maharishi science - modern science is coming to a similar conclusion about reality as a whole. David Bohm, the eminent physicist, has developed a “holographic” view of the universe. A hologram is a no-lens photographic product in which each part contains a reproduction of the whole. This technology invented by Dennis Gabor (Nobel Physicist) in the sixties has given us a new model to understand reality, David Bohm thinks, of course *mutatis mutandis*; except that (a) a hologram is produced by just two coherent light waves colliding, while the universe may be the product of several energy waves colliding and (b) a hologram is static, while reality is dynamic and has to be understood in the rheo-mode or flowing reality mode.

Dr. Chopra is right in proposing a parallelism between mental activity and quantum phenomena. Neurons have between them a synapse of 200 Angstroms; this seems to be experimentally verifiable; quantum phenomena within the atom also operate at jumps of about 200A°. If there are 15 to 20 billion neurons in our central cortex, and

they are firing at the rate of about 20 times a second across a 200 Å° gap, this may create enough coherent waves in the brain to operate some kind of a holographic technique of recording and recall. Main stream biologists have yet to accept this theory of holographic recording and recall. But the parallels are indeed striking.

Quantum theory (it is a shame to call it mechanics, though our basic categories of understanding are causal-mechanical) does not support our notions of time, space, and causality. Two ‘particles’ totally separated from each other in our terms of space, can immediately influence each other by changing itself. And this without any known message or energy being transmitted from one particle to the other (according to our ordinary conceptions of space, locality and distance), and certainly faster than the speed of light (C or 300,000 km per second), and therefore without any time-lapse. This is called non-local causality.

David Bohm puts it this way: “It follows, then, that the explicate and manifest order of consciousness is not ultimately distinct from that of matter in general. Fundamentally these are essentially different aspects of the one over all order. This explains a basic fact that we have pointed out earlier - that the explicate order of matter in general is also in essence the sensuous explicate order that is presented in consciousness in ordinary experience.”²¹

Reality as a whole is a projection of several waves of energy of all kinds, both known and unknown - we call them gravitational, electromagnetic, weak, strong, sound, light etc. - producing our perception of reality, which is produced by the same projections in consciousness and in the external world.

How close this perception is to at least three of the traditional Asian religious understandings of reality!

Take, the Hindu notion of *maya*, particularly the post-Sankara philosophical elucidation of this concept. Briefly stated, the present perception and experience of reality or *samsara* as a flowing reality, is the joint product of a certain vikshepa or projection of power (*maya*) by Ultimate Reality (*Brahman*) and the veil of nescience or *avidya* brought to perception by the human mind.

In the Buddhist tradition, the conceptual formulation is even closer to modern physics' perception of reality. The concept of *pratitya-samudpada* or 'conditioned co-origination' holds that our perception of reality is the joint product of the conceptually indescribable reality and our own mental sensory equipment.

In the Chinese tradition also the *Ying-Yang* dialectic is in some ways parallel to the above. Even more clear are the concepts of tao or order and *te* or power which together constitute cosmic reality as well as the human reality.

In the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition, this world of ours is a projection of God's *energeia*, which is the common ground of all nature including human nature. It is God's will (power), and wisdom, and word that keeps both the universe and humanity going. I have worked this out in my own study of Gregory of Nyssa.²²

The human system is a sub-system of the whole universe, and is integrally related to it. Disturbances in that integral relation constitute disease. Restoration of that relation to the whole is healing, and the whole itself is the healing force - the whole is the energy source from which matter, life and consciousness all originate.

Matter, life and consciousness are the healing agents. Western medicine has concentrated too exclusively on matter, and when it does focus on life, it is only to destroy through antibiotics what is regarded as harmful life. We need a framework for modern medicine in which we see matter, life and consciousness as a single continuum in reality as a whole and in the body.

This means that while pharmacology is not to be abandoned, it is to be recognized as only one element in the healing process. Equally important are life and consciousness as well as the relations of the body-mind whole to the whole of reality. The role of a loving and caring community as a healing force needs very special consideration in the wholistic pattern of health and healing centres tomorrow. Consciousness, and its various levels, including the transcendent and the hypnotic, should also be engineered positively in the interest of healing. Faith healing needs specialized attention.

It is towards such a holistic healing ministry that both medical personnel and the public should now devote most of their interests. This would mean also restructuring society in order to make all social relations holistic and health-producing, and the human environment a livable and sustainable one.

NOTES

1. McGilvray, James C. *The Quest for Health and Wholeness*, Tübingen, The German Institute for Medical Mission, 1981 see p. 51.
2. *ibid* . p. 16.
3. *ibid*. Foreword p. XII.
4. Niels Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*, New York, John Wiley and sons, 1958. p. 4.
5. See *Nature*: 121, 78 and 580 (1928).
6. For a not too profound discussion of some of these issues see, Joseph Rouse, *Knowledge and Power; Towards a Political Philosophy of Science*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press. 1987.
7. Fontana Paperback, London, 1983.
8. *Op. cit.* p.66.
9. This point has been convincingly argued in F. J. Ayala, "Beyond Darwinism? The Challenge of Macroevolution to the synthetic Theory of Evolution" in P.D: Asquith and T. Nickles (eds) *PSA* 1982 vol 2. East Lansing, Mich, 1983 (Philosophy of Science Association), pp 275-292.
10. See e.g. Paul Thompson, *The Structure of Biological Theories*, SUNY Press, Albany, N.Y. 1989, p.12.
11. See Steven J Gould and N. Eldredge, "Punctuated Equilibria: The Tempo and Mode of Evolution Reconsidered" in *Paleobiology* 3 (1977): 115-151.
12. Paul Thompson, *op cit* pp 95 ff.

13. Gregory Bateson. *Mind and Nature - A Necessary Unity*, Toronto, New York, London, Bantam New Age Books, 1980, p.164.
14. *ibid.*
15. *op. cit* ch. IV pp. 99-142.
16. *op. cit* p. 102.
17. Larry Dossey, M.D. *Space, Time and Medicine*, New Science Library, Shambhala, Boston and London, 1985. See chapter one, on “Hexes and Molecules” - pp 1-6.
18. Homer refers to him as the “blameless physician, and names his sons Machaon and Podalirus, who were surgeons in the army. Legend had it that Asklepius (Latin Aesculapius) was himself the son of Apollo, and was instructed in medicine by Chiron, wisest of the Centaurs and son of Chronos. See E. J. and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 1945.
19. Ilich, Ivan, *Medical Nemesis*, New York, Bantam 1977 p 23, cited by Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point*, Fontana Paperback p 149.
20. In M. C. Bhandari, (ed) *Inner Realms of Mind*, Bharat Nirman, Delhi, 1989 p. 3.
21. D. Bohm, *Wholeness and The Implicate Order*, Ark Paperback, London et. al., 1980, p. 208.
22. P. Gregorios, *Cosmic Man*, Paragon, New York, 1988, 274 pps

What is Wholeness?

There is a wholeness that is given, and a wholeness that is to be achieved or experienced. Our ordinary perception seems by nature fragmentary, unwhole. The knower stands over against the known, apart from it, and the knowledge gained is ‘objective’ à la Popper, something which can be stored in books and libraries. Knower, known and knowledge thus remain three disparate realities, and the whole cannot be in this situation.

But today we have access to two other levels of perception, thanks to modern physics and modern astronomy. If we term our ordinary sense-perception the macro-level, there is below it the sub-atomic or micro-level, and above it the cosmic or mega-level. The mega level of astrophysics is partly perceivable through our telescopes and partly through our mental processes. The micro-level is less perceptible to our senses. The electron microscope does not lead us to direct vision of the sub-atomic level.

At the level of elementary ‘particles’, our eyes, even with the best magnifying instruments at our disposal, do not directly encounter the reality. We need elaborate tracing and measuring mechanisms even to get a good guess about the way an electron or a neutron functions. But in order to trace or measure a sub-atomic particle, we need to add a quantum of energy to the particle, even to detect it. But a single photon particle from the measuring device colliding with the measured particle already deflects its course and transforms it. So our knowledge of the subatomic level remains conjectural and not directly sensate.

Nor do we perceive the universe as a whole with our senses. Telescopes can reveal cosmic phenomena in a region of the universe, and electronic computing can bring together infrared or other photographs from various regions on a single screen. But there is no way for our telescopes to gather data from all the galaxies and all the ‘regions’ of the universe. So we cannot “set eyes on” the universe, as our space travellers in recent times set eyes on the earth as spaceship. In fact, the universe is not even conceptualisable, or “image-

able” pictorially. We cannot stand outside the universe to see it ‘objectively.’

The whole that we want to understand must integrate what we perceive at all the three levels, the sub-atomic, the ordinary and the cosmic/universal. But our perception of our own selves uses a different mode from that which we use at the micro, macro and mega levels. Any notion of the whole must include the one in whom the notion functions, the ‘subjectivity’ of the perceiver or conceiver, which effects and shapes the perception at all four levels - micro, macro, mega and mind.

The net results of the above observations is that the whole is not available, either to conceptualisation or to descriptive symbolic or linguistic depiction. Neither concept nor language can grasp the whole. If this hard fact is not firmly grasped, we are likely to fall into new delusions about our knowledge and concepts.

It is my humble view that Fritjof Capra, in his ‘The Turning Point’ falls precisely into this trap. After having exposed the faults of a mechanistic model of reality, he opts finally for “the Systems View of life”, seeming life on the model of a “self organizing system.” Since he includes the environments as part of the dynamic system, he gives the impression that he is dealing with the whole.²

Wholeness reflects itself at various levels, but cannot be objectified in any situation. The whole is the Absolute Subject, in which all subjectivity and all objectivity ultimately *merge* and from which they (subjectivity and objectivity) constantly *emerge* at various levels. Even that statement must be qualified with the further statement that it is only a conceptual linguistic statement, and therefore does not ‘describe’ the whole.

Once conceptual image which the Physicist David Bohm³ has popularized is the “Holoverse.” Conceptual images can sometimes help us to discern the defects of other conceptual images and Bohm’s concept of the whole as a Holoverse is eminently useful in this sense. The analogy for the whole is taken from the recent technology of holography,⁴ a three dimensional photography technique using wave

properties of light rather than the straight line propagation of light used by conventional lens photography. The important feature of the hologram is not merely its three-dimensional perspective, but the fact that each part contains the whole in miniature. Since the holograph analogy for reality suggests a static condition, Bohm uses the expression 'holo-movement.' His conception of the whole is in terms of a multi-layered order which is dynamic. Life is one of the layers of such order, consciousness another layer of different complexity, and ordinary inorganic matter a third order within the system, which included many orders unknown to us as yet. Bohm is sanguine in his belief that the various layers of dynamic reality in the 'holoverse' is in principle knowable by us.

Brilliant as the Bohmian concept of the universe as a mutually related multi-layered web of structures and patterns of dynamic energies, it remains a *concept* and as such inadequate to depict reality. We humans, however, are conceptual - linguistic creatures, and by training we have become incapable of dealing with reality without concept and language.

We should at this point reflect also on the question of the adequacy of our two-dimensional logic of non-contradiction to cope with the whole; the rules for valid inference, if confined to such a two-dimensional or binary logic or a propositional calculus using Boolean Algebra, can only lead to inescapable contradictions.

Scholars like Bohm and Capra, though aware of the fact that the binary logic and calculus have their roots in the mechanistic Newtonian perspective, sometimes proceed as if a conceptual mathematical representation of reality was possible. Bohm discusses the problem of language in his *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*⁵ and comes out with some profound statements, e.g. that language itself is a human function which ought to be studied scientifically, and that language distorts when we take nouns (subject and object) more seriously than the verb (predicate). Language, the subject-verb-object mode, is one of the causes of the experience of fragmentation. Bohm offers us practically a new language called the rheo-mode, which emphasizes verbs, dynamic processes, rather than things or nouns conceived statically.

But this does not solve the language problem. Even in the rheo mode, there is the temptation to mistake the map for the country, the language for the truth. Of course, Bohm admits that Reality and Knowledge are processes, as has been held from Heraclitus to Whitehead. “All is flux”, including knowledge, thought, statement, and language. Becoming is being. Knowledge too is a flowing river, a dynamic field. Even this writing is part of that flow. Bohm clearly sees this. But for him, the key question is: “Can we be aware of the ever-changing and flowing reality of this actual process of knowledge?”⁶ In other words, the best we can do is to be aware that awareness is a stream that keeps on flowing. Bohm has learned much from non-western cultures, but was still a westerner all the same in his sanguine confidence about conscious awareness of awareness as a flowing stream as the best we can do in knowing reality as a whole.

This certainly is not the view in an eastern way of dealing with Reality, such as Madhyamika Buddhism. This way begins by distinguishing between the “Two Truths” - one Truth of worldly convention and the other of ultimate meaning. According to Chandrakirti, the worldly convention (*samvrti*) can be true (*tathya-samvrti*) or false (*mithya-samvrti*), depending on the correctness or otherwise of the perception and the reasoning process. But even a “true” worldly convention or *samvrti* has only a “dependently co-originating” or *pratitya-samutpanna* reality. As Nagarjuna states it.

The reality of all beings

Neither arises nor passes away.....

Where there is quiescence of mental activity.

There the need for discourse ceases.⁷

David Bohm's *rheo-mode* of linguistic expression is still within that *samvrti* which is the result of discursive mental activity. Only when that activity is quietened, and the “thundering silence” of the *Sunyata* mode is experienced, there can be perception of the ultimate truth, in which the knower and the known are experienced as one, the knowledge itself being that experience. Wholeness, when fully experienced, is an experience of liberating union, not of conceptual

awareness, however dynamic that awareness may be. The west now puts a premium on dynamic as opposed to static. But there is a possible cessation of awareness, in which such dichotomies as static and dynamic are themselves surpassed. It is, for the Buddhist, *nirvana*, the blowing out of the analytical consciousness, where awareness itself is transcended in the liberating experience of the whole.

Can Christians reconcile themselves with such a perception? Is this not *monism*, *advaita* and all that kind of heresy? I personally do not think so. I think the Christian perception of reality is both holistic and apophatic as in Buddhist philosophy. Especially in the Eastern Christian tradition we always conceive the Creator with the Creation as a single reality within which the created order subsists only by the wisdom, will and word of the Creator, who continually sustains and guides it. And the cosmos without the Creator is not a whole. The whole cannot be conceptually grasped. We can only realize our own dependence on the Creator and in that realisation find meaning and sustenance. We cannot know the whole, but the whole makes it possible for us to fit into it, and there to find bliss and peace.

Notes

1. Fontana Paperbacks, London, 1983. Original Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982 and Wildwood House, London, 1982.

2. op cit. See especially chapter 9 on "The Systems View of life" - pp. 285-332, also p. 89. See also Ervin Laszlo, *Introduction to Systems Philosophy*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1972, and *The Systems View of the World*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1957, New York, Braziller, 1972.

3. David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.

4. The technique of holography was developed by the Engineer-Physicist Dennis Gabor in 1947, He won the Nobel Prize in 1971. In conventional photography using lenses, only the straight-line propagation of light is utilized. In holography, which is a no-lens technology, the wave functions of light are utilized - one phase of the wave being reflected by another 'reference wave', and the two

together being recorded on a photographic film negative. The holographic theories of David Bohm and Karl Pribram are discussed in detail in the special issue of *Drornenon*, Spring/ Summer 1980, and in the special issue of *Re-vision*, Summer/Fall, 1978. For a Soviet account, see Yu. I. Ostrovsky, *Holography and Its Application*, Mir Publishers, Moscow, 1977.

5. op. cit pp 28 - 64 p. 64

6. ibid. p. 64

7. A free translation of *Mulamadhyamakarikā* 18:7

For a fuller discussion see Gadjin Naga's *The Foundational Standpoint of Madhyamika Philosophy*, Eng. Tr. John P. Keenann, State University of N.Y. Press, Albany, 1989.

Holistic Health and Healing

The word ‘holistic’ defies definition. Different people use it in different ways.

In the field of health and healing, some people think of holistic medicine primarily in terms of taking the body and the mind of a human person together as a single whole entity and not as two. This is legitimate, since modern western medicine, when it went scientific in the last century, set aside the ‘mind’ as a separate entity to be taken up later by specialists like psychologists and psychiatrists, leaving the body for the physician and the surgeon.

The new psycho-somatic approach, or mind-body medicine, which as a scientific trend developed approximately three decades ago, was however only a stage on the way to what we now regard as holistic health and healing.

There have been important developments since medical scientists began taking the mind-body problem seriously. One has seen the widespread use by therapists of practices like bio-feedback, meditation, relaxation, and even alternative systems of medicine like Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Chinese or Taoist systems including Acupuncture and Acupressure, Tibetan medicine, Herbal remedies and so on. Another has been the development of new “cross-disciplines” like psycho-neuro-immunology. There have been many clinical reports of strange wart cures and placebo effects which cannot be accounted for by ordinary medical science, It is now fairly well established that factors once regarded as ‘purely mental’, like perceptions, beliefs, emotions, thoughts and attitudes, have a definite role in the healing process.

It seems, however, that we need to go one step farther, in order to get at what we mean today by Holistic Health and Healing, not so much to define, as to depict some of its main characteristics.

I. Planet, Person and Paradigm Shift

The first thing we have to note is that neither the human person, nor the planet earth on which the person is totally dependent, exists

or can subsist in isolation. Neither one can be understood except as part of larger systems of which it is only a subsystem.

The very word “person” is a relational term. Human persons, as far as we know, can be formed and developed only through interaction with other persons and social groups like family, relatives, peer groups, societies, religious groups, national populations etc. Even if we take the human species as a whole, that whole is in turn dependent on other wholes - like for instance the system of nature or the biosphere as such, which includes air and water, earth and sea, mountains and rivers, sun and moon, and so on.

Similarly the very word ‘planet’ indicates that our earth is a satellite unit of the solar system, existing only as its subsystem, dependent on it for its very sustenance and energy, interacting with other planets in the system as well as with its own moon, and never in isolation from the system. In holistic health and healing we need to pay constant attention to the system of relationships, which play a most significant role both in the causing of disease and in the healing of persons.

So far we are on fairly undisputed territory, though current medical science does not take all these factors into account. We need, however, to go even further in our envisioning of the whole of reality of which we are a subsystem.

There is, as of now, no single paradigm of the whole of reality on which scientists and other theoreticians agree. This is especially so if we can step outside the bounds of western civilisation and western scientific thought in envisioning the reality process.

Negatively, we can say that mechanical or static models of person, Planet or Reality as a whole will not do. But even dynamic models are usually conceived in time-space, subject-object categories and frameworks. In fact our human language seems hardly capable of going beyond these. Past, though the present, to future (time), and locality (space) seem unavoidable even in a dynamic paradigm. Extension in time and space is an aspect of the reality we inhabit and experience. Change (in time) and movement (in space) appear to be foundational for person, planet and universe alike. Paradigms can only be maps; they should not be mistaken for the territories they map.

II. Quanta and Consciousness

But there are two interconnected aspects of our human experience where time and space take on unusual characteristics. In quantum reality and in the understanding of our own human consciousness, time and space behave extraordinarily. And these are quite important for any paradigm which should undergird the theory of a new medical science. I propose here about Holistic Health and Healing. But we shall refer in ordinary language to some of the unusual discoveries of modern physics which have relevance for medical science and healing therapies.

While mechanical causality may have helped us and can still help us understand many phenomena, there are other areas of experience where the cause-effect connection, within time and space, with the cause preceding in time and acting through space to produce the effect, cannot be established or even postulated.

In the area of health and healing too, not all healing can be causally understood or controlled. Or if causality is to be postulated, it has to be in terms of 'non-local causation', i.e. without any lapse of time between cause and effect, without the passing of any message through any observable medium from cause to effect.

Consciousness or mind cannot be spatially localized. The human neuro-biological system does not seem to have a centre either in the brain or anywhere else in the individual human body. It has a quality that transcends space and time; it is more corporate than individual, ultimately unitary, able to act at a distance, and to travel without lapse of time. The healing power of mind or consciousness has been clinically observed in all forms of healing by faith and prayer, in placebo effects, in some alternative systems of healing etc. The biological path by which the causal chain acts may not be directly traceable, but the healing effects are evident in too many cases to be dismissed as merely anecdotal. Any new revision of medical theory will have to take these factors into account.

Our growing acquaintance with reality in the quantal realm has not yet taken us to the point where we can describe that reality

satisfactorily in our time-and-space conceptual language. We now know that we do not know reality itself, but only know our perception of it. All our descriptions, measurements and mathematical formulae relate only to the perceptions. Quantum reality cannot be adequately described in the categories of Newtonian mechanics.

Some things however, we can affirm, as paradoxical indications of our quantum experience. Reality is interconnected everything seems, ultimately, in immediate touch with everything else. Human beings cannot stand outside reality and look at it from outside; they are on the inside as participants; they are part of the reality they observe, and partially shape that reality in the very act of observing. Our experience of time and space and causality at the macro level has no validity at other levels of our experience. In the healing process too some of the observed phenomena have more affinity with the quantal than the mechanical realm.

III. Insight as Healing Agent

In psychiatry and psychoanalysis, the healing role of insight has long been recognized. The patient's self understanding is what the therapist works on, in order to induce new insights which give the capacity to solve problems and predicaments in a new way.

In ordinary healing, however, the role of insight is not as widely recognised. The whole Indian religious tradition is based on insight as the way to deliverance or moksha through self-realisation. Even the insights coming from ordinary knowledge and from scientific enquiry can lead to stress reduction and thus contribute to healing. The disciplined pursuit of science, philosophy, law or other academic disciplines, of arts such as sculpturing, painting, music and so on, and even of practical arts like weaving, cooking, interior decoration, pottery etc., so long as they provide for some sort of disciplined total involvement, can be helpful in the process of healing.

A new medical theory should take into account the role of insight as well as that of aesthetic experience of true beauty, as positive factors in therapy.

IV. Relationship, Faith and Community

Relationships are central in Holistic Healing, and that at many levels. People are today talking about Transpersonal Medicine, as they talked yesterday about Transpersonal Psychology.

First, there is the healer-healed relationship, or doctor-patient relationship. Love, empathy and compassion on the part of the healer towards the patient and some response from the patient to that love can generate strong healing energies which make the work of healing quicker. Doctors and nurses who genuinely care make all the difference in the healing process. This may be the opposite of the time honoured idea of scientific dispassion. But healing is more art than science.

Much ill health is due to isolation and alienation - the loneliness of not knowing that others care. And our present civilisation which puts too much emphasis on each one doing his or her own thing, generates loneliness in havoc-wreaking measure. Bolstering the individual ego and enhancing the strength of the person can both be futile if these are not aspects of healthy and mutually self-giving social relationships, chronic loneliness, as distinct from cultivated and disciplined spiritual solitude, can be toxic and generate morbidity. If the healer, by his/her love, compassion and empathy, can bring the patient out of the morbid isolation of loneliness, the healing process would be remarkably accelerated.

The second area of relationships is the whole community around the patient. This includes the physicians, surgeons, nurses and the paramedical personnel in the hospital, the patient's relatives, visitors, and even those who without actual face to face contact with the patient and often even without the patient's knowledge, function as a community faithfully praying for the healing of the patient.

The attitudes of those in direct contact with the patient, even over phone or through other message, are very important, for these can generate healing energy. But the faith of a community and its fervent and sustained prayer can definitely exercise high therapeutic efficacy. The prayer of a single person, in direct contact with the patient or

without such contact, can also be immensely effective. There are secular substitutes for prayer available to agnostics: like positive imagining, or intensely desiring and willing the healing of the patient.

Even in these, a fundamental faith in the positive or beneficent aspect of reality is a precondition. The joint effort in prayer of more than two people has always a special effectiveness. This is the mystery of community.

V. Touch and Ritual

The idea of the “healing touch” has recently come into vogue, especially in nursing literature. It can also be the “caring touch” that communicates to the patient as well as to members of the patient’s family the assurance of care and support. Medical practitioners and nurses have to break out of their self-image as technicians and become warm human beings, expending something of themselves in the act of caring. This cannot be mere mechanical touching, but the touch that communicates confidence, warmth, reassurance, support and understanding, as well as respects the personhood and dignity of the patient.

Touching is communication, a most intimate form of communication. Therefore it is important that the other person’s privacy and dignity is fully respected in the touch and that it does not become an intrusion. Nursing personnel have to be careful in keeping their professional dignity and yet being warmly humane, but the latter is an essential part of holistic healing.

Another very effective form of touch is “laying hands on by those who pray for the sick, and by faith healers. The hand becomes a medium through which healing forces transfer to the patient from the healer. Usually the right hand of the healer is placed on the forehead or crown of the patient and a prayer is said, silently or audibly. The patient, usually with closed eyes, with faith, and in a spirit of receptive meditation, receives the healing energies.

Ritual as a healing technique has for long been difficult to understand for the modern western rational mind. The European Enlightenment of the 18th century made western an rather anticlerical

and antiritual. But new anthropological studies have begun to show that ritual plays a very major role in the social communication of modern humanity. Dr. Jeanne Achterberg, a forceful advocate of holistic healing and especially of "Transpersonal Medicine" as a new system of healing has written a very perceptive article in a recent (winter 1992, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 158 ff) issue of *Revision* on "Ritual: The Foundation for Transpersonal Medicine."

Ritual is a participatory community act, in which words, actions and symbols combine to communicate to the participant meaning which cannot be expressed in words alone. Long before the human species acquired its language skill it has been using ritual as the mode of expressing meaning. In healing too, along with other forms of interpersonal relationships, ritual plays a significant role.

Jesus, the Great Healer, sometimes healed by the mere word, sometimes even without a word. At other times, he made mud with dust and saliva and applied it as salve in the eye of the man born blind, asking him to go and wash in the pool of Shiloam, or asked the paralytic to pick up his bedding and walk. The ancient churches developed special rituals for the healing of the sick. A modern surgeon in Medical City Dallas Hospital may light a blue sulphur flame in the operation theatre and recite an abracadabra to heal a patient whose disease could not be diagnosed or cured by all the complex techniques of modern medicine (See Larry Dossey, *Space, Time and Medicine*, 1982). The role of ritual in healing cannot be neglected in any new theory of healing and health.

VI. Alternative Techniques of Healing

Many alternative techniques of healing have recently caught the attention of the general public, both within western culture and in other cultures. Clinically successful, these alternative techniques imply a theoretical framework which is not always clearly articulated, but which seems radically different from that of western medical science.

Dr. Irving Dardik of New Jersey has, for example, clinically demonstrated non invasive techniques for curing chronic hepatitis and other similar ailments. Dr. Dardik, well trained in western medicine

and surgery, explains his technique theoretically in terms of restoring certain basic stimulation-relaxation rhythms in the human system to be in harmony with the larger reality system, which he conceives as complexes of energy undulations.

Another example comes from the modern Prophet Mokichi Okada of Japan, who developed the healing art of Johrei, based on spiritual energy, as one aspect of a whole complex of holistic healing techniques, including exposure to beauty, organic farming, and abstaining from chemical drugs and fertilizers. His theoretical basis is the clear conviction that the sensible world is undergirded and directed by the spiritual universe. His system is now practised in many countries by his disciples.

The theoretical basis of the western system called Homeopathy is worth examining again, free from the bitterness and rancour of the earlier debate between Homeopathy and Allopathy. Similar examination of the theoretical basis of Chinese, Indian and Tibetan systems may reveal insights important for a holistic paradigm of health and healing.

VII. Towards the Making of a Theory

All that has been stated above does not imply by any means that we should completely abandon all the ground so painstakingly covered by modern medicine in the scientific analysis of human anatomy, pathology, and therapy. However nearly all aspects of that analysis will have to be radically re-examined to see if they are based on mistaken assumptions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human, as well as about health and healing.

There are problems about current medical theory and practice which we can no longer afford to ignore. One could mention several:

- a. the increasingly exorbitant, and for many unaffordable cost of medical care;
- b. diseases and ill health induced by hospitals, doctors and Pharmaceuticals;
- c. the unholy alliance among the health insurance business, the

- medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry working against the interests of the patient;
- d. the arrogant exclusion of all alternate therapies and healing systems by a dominant medical ideology which claims that it alone is scientific;
 - e. the Cartesian, mechanistic, reductionistic, individualistic understanding of the human person on which medical science is still based;
 - f. the chemical-bacterial theory of disease and therapy;
 - g. the growing mechanisation and technologisation of diagnosis and therapy;
 - h. the increasingly poor quality of human relationships prevailing between healers and patients.

We will have to question our ideas and assumptions about nutrition and healthy nourishment of mind and body. We will have to ask whether our so-called scientific, mechanized, chemical-fertilizer-pesticide farming methods lead to important health problems for humanity and for the rest of the biosphere or life-community. We will have to ask questions about fossil fuel combustion, carbon dioxide and ozone production, toxic waste disposal, usage of radioactive compounds and so on.

We will also have to ask questions about the way we live together and deal with each other, for that is the most fundamental part of the human health. Justice, peace, and a life-enhancing environment are aspects of human health care. Economics and politics cannot be easily separated from health and health care.

Reducing holistic health to transpersonal medicine can hardly allow us to deal with all the problems and issues we have listed in this paper. Neither the mind-body approach nor transpersonal Medicine can be sufficiently comprehensive to deal with holistic health.

As we stated at the beginning there is as yet neither a satisfactory definition of the term “holistic healing”, nor an adequate paradigm of reality within which a new theory of health and healing can be built up.

Reflection reveals that wholes can be of various kinds:

- a. the original whole from which everything comes to be and on which everything is contingent, and without which no part can exist or subsist;
- b. an organic whole in which the component parts can function only in the framework of the whole and not apart from it, eg. the human or animal body and its organs;
- c. a systemic whole: an open system like the planet earth or the human person which exists only in a complex web of relationships with many other entities which together with it constitute a whole; the planet may or may not be aware of these relationships, but does respond to them. In the case of the person he/she may be not consciously aware of all these relationships; but the person's existence is significantly affected by them nevertheless.
- d. the whole of a particular entity: eg. the whole world, the whole country, the whole bottle, the whole leg, etc.

All four of these aspects of wholeness have their own significance for the healing process.

The English word 'whole' is etymologically related to health and healing. It has more of a qualitative than a quantitative sense. One English dictionary gives the meanings of the adjective 'whole' as: "sound; healthy; healed; intact; entire." The word 'wholesome' means promoting good health; to be made whole is to be healed.

The Holistic Approach is in principle opposed to all Reductionist understandings of the human person and of the human eco-socio-bio-physical endowment. The positive value of specialised training and study is recognized; at the same time the dangers in the fragmentation reduction on which all specialisation is based should also be understood and provided for. Modern Science itself is intrinsically reductionistic, since it can deal with only sensibles, measurables and with what is repeatedly experimentable. Reality always transcends the categories of modern science.

The Holistic Approach centres around human relations, harmonies, attitudes, meaning-perceptions, faith, hope and love, spiritual disciplines like prayer and meditation, environmental improvement, and community support as fundamental in the healing process. Unfortunately, Western Allopathic Medicine, when it decided in the last century to be strictly scientific, took over a reductionist paradigm of reality from the then prevailing science, which excluded these factors from the healing process. The 19th century scientific world view, which even people like Sigmund Freud blindly accepted as their theoretical basis, saw reality as composed exclusively of strictly measurable, mechanically structured, observable, matter and force, or *Kraft* und *Stoff* as the Germans called it.

Medical Science has shown a great unwillingness to examine this its precariously dated reductionist theoretical foundation. Medical Education does not equip medical graduates to be capable of fundamental reflection and theoretical reconstruction. Such reflection and reconstruction of theory are urgently needed, as a radically new basis for a radically new type of health care and healing. The formulation of such an alternate paradigm of Reality and the articulation of a new healing praxis based on that paradigm are among the major objectives of the Holistic Health Movement.

We are far from having arrived at a consensus among those thinking enquirers within and without the medical profession about the basic nature of such an alternate paradigm. The formulation of such a new paradigm demands several qualifications on the part of those working on it. In addition to the awareness of the problems associated with current medical theory and practice, they have also to be aware of the discussion in recent western (English-speaking, German and French) Philosophy of Science which reveals the precarious truth status of modern science itself. They would also have to have some acquaintance with alternate medical systems and their theoretical foundations eg., Taoist, Tibetan, Native American, Homeopathic, Ayurvedic and other systems. Some knowledge of the healing methods of unconventional healers will also help.

The basic problems with all paradigms or models of reality is that

they are pictures: space-time, subject-object, human conceptions of some reality in our experience: David Bohm's Implicate order of Holographic Reality in the Rheomode with its *soma* and *signa* modes of matter and mood; Rupert Sheldrake's "Immanent Hierarchy of Conscious Selves" in nature causing morphogenesis, evolutionary progress and perhaps healing; Gregory Bateson's Universe and Person as analogously evolving through stochastic spurts, which is basically a Consciousness model of the Universe shared by Larry Dossey, Willis Harmon and many others; the Energy wave model of Irving Dardik; the Buddhist perception of the Universe as *Sunya-Pratitya-Samutpanna* or Void-conditionally-originate; Chinese Hua-Yen or Avatamsakasutra Buddhism's vision of reality as universal mutual interpenetration with non-local causality; the Vibration-Resonance model of Japanese prophet Mikichi Okada; the *Ousia-Energeia-Diastema* dynamic universe model of 4th century Christian Father Gregory of Nyssa; and perhaps many others that could be mentioned including the Dharmic and Sankhya models of Indian metaphysics. All of these are dynamic, holistic models; but they are models, paradigms, pictures drawn from human experience and human conceptualisation of Reality.

A paradigm is a paradigm - a working model that can be more or less helpful than others in dealing with reality. They are all maps, which we can easily mistake for reality itself. Reality escapes mapping or exact paradigm representation. The Holistic Paradigm can thus be only a working model, not a picture of Reality itself. It will also have to be revised in course of time, as our perceptions change and more and more anomalies between paradigm and reality come to light. Without a provisional New Paradigm for medical theory and practice we cannot proceed very far however. There is not much use in just going on tinkering with the old and familiar paradigm uncritically drawn from the obsolete world view of the science of the end of the last century. Knowing the limitations of any paradigm we must nevertheless strive for a new paradigm which will facilitate more humane, more just, less damaging and more holistic systems of health care.

Perhaps the building up of an adequate theory will have to wait,

until more significant advances are made in healing practice. In the meantime, some things can be done towards building up a theory:

- a. build up a network of competent and creative healers from all over the world and from all cultures and provide them with a framework of mutual contact;
- b. begin a multi-language journal, to begin with a quarterly, in English, French, Japanese, German, Arabic and Spanish at least, to publish high quality research papers on clinical experiences of holistic health and healing as well as of alternate systems of medicine;
- c. convoke regional conferences on holistic health in the regional languages, and make available their insights to the wider network;
- d. those involved in medical education explore ways (for example holding seminars and discussion sessions in medical schools) of how the medical training curriculum can be revised to bring it more in line with the insights of holistic health and healing;
- e. seek to use the resources of both the World Health Organisation and the Council for International Organisations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) to deepen and promote the ideas of holistic health and healing, and to make the WHO itself move from the concept of Health Delivery to the concept of Holistic Healing;
- f. seek foundation grants to get a small but highly competent team of international experts to work on a research project for laying the foundations for a fresh theory of Holistic Health and Healing.
- g. Create and fund a project for professional education and training in holistic health and healing, centrally as well as regionally and nationally, exploring possibilities of beginning the pioneering with existing institutions of medical education.

The Future of Health Care

Allopathy or Western Medicine seems bound to recede, in the not too distant future, from its present dominance and monopoly of healing. The signs are unmistakable, though very few doctors and surgeons seem to be able to read the signs the way I do. I personally attribute that unwillingness or inability to their training and mind set.

We have briefly stated some of the reasons in our consultation papers on MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS OF HEALING. But they bear restatement.

First, the cost of western medical care has generally become exorbitant, and often beyond the means of a majority of the world's people. The more technologized the methods of diagnosis and therapy, the higher the cost. Art Buchwald's humorous column appearing in the Hindu of Sunday, October 16, 1994, is not just humour, but a cutting social satire, which deserves to be heeded. The point is this: the patient or patient's relatives have, especially in the USA, little say in how much the diagnosis and therapy would *cost*; the doctor is held by the fear of being used against for not using all possible techniques of diagnosis and therapy; he therefore protects himself and prescribes expensive testing and treatment, and most people find that the* health insurance is exhausted before the treatment leads to cure. People are going bankrupt, or have to sell property to pay their medical bills. The situation is not radically different in many West European countries, though the insurance racket is perhaps less complicated. In India too, hospital expenses are a heavy burden on most domestic budgets. This has to change.

Second, we have enough documentation about the menacing growth of doctor-induced or hospital-induced pathology in all countries. The statistics on hiatrogenic ailments and hospitalisation is frightening. One takes great risks today in going to an Allopathic doctor for treatment. He may meddle with your body by chemical or surgical intervention which results in unexpected new pathological disturbances. There is great risk in western medical treatment as many people in all countries, including the present writer, can easily

testify. The doctor or hospital may be careless, negligent or ignorant; sometimes even callous; it is the patient who suffers consequently.

Third, as Dr. Girija says in her article on “The Crisis of Health Care” in the same issue of the Hindu cited above, “The news from the Western Medical front is ominous. We who are so used to looking westward for all kinds of miracle cures are in for a shock. It has been recently reported that antibiotics have become increasingly ineffective. Many of the bacteria known to western doctors are said to have developed resistance to several widely used antibiotics. In the U.S. in 1992 alone 13,300 hospital patients died of infections that resisted every drug used. The crisis is serious enough for an American doctor to admit in a recent best-seller that western medicine’s purported triumph over infectious disease has become an illusion.”

The matter is more serious than what most people think. If the West is so scared of the Indian Plague outbreak, should we not be equally concerned about the West which should be declared an infected territory with many strains of disease-causing bacteria against which there seems to be no remedy? Tuberculosis, Meningitis, Malaria and Gonorrhoea can be caused by some of these resistant strains.

The whole antibiotic culture, despite its achievement in saving many lives and healing many diseases previously thought to be incurable, is certainly not an unmixed blessing, obviously. When we bragged some decades ago about our overcoming to certain infectious diseases, we hardly envisaged a scenario where our over-use of antibiotics leads to the generation of resistant strains of some of the deadly bacteria - a scenario in which human beings could be “overcome” by bacteria resistant to all antibiotics infection by these resistant strains should be viewed with as much alarm as the spread of AIDS. In both cases inescapable and proximate death seems to be the outcome.

It is time that the medical system abandoned the easy path of prescribing antibiotics for everything, including for viral infections! If we refuse to abandon this path catastrophe awaits us, globally.

Fourth, there is the over-chemicalisation of the earth and of human

bodies, as also of animal bodies. In the west, cattle are also often fed with chemicals and treated with antibiotics, which then get lodged in milk and meat. Without knowing it we may be consuming more than a fair share of antibiotics, through our normal food intake. I am told that milk is certified to be saleable in the USA even if it contains traces of up to 80 different antibiotics. Through chemical fertilisers and chemically processed farm feed, we pump in tremendous quantities of chemicals both into the earth and into the human body. Food preservatives stuff more chemicals into the human body, and even into the earth through the disposal system. Chemicals are changing not only the human body, but also the human mind. The current upsurge of mindless violence in our societies may be at least in part due to the over-chemicalisation of body and brain. The life environment is itself ruined by over-chemicalisation of land, air and water. Only a civilisational change, including radical transformation of the industrial-technological culture and of the agricultural, nutritional and medical systems, can rescue us from this sad predicament.

Fifth we see a depersonalisation of healing, happening in the western system, due to overreliance on technology. Some people even envisage a situation where we would no longer need, in most illness to consult medical doctors at all; a home computer can connect to a central information network, and by feeding in the symptoms can get both diagnosis and prescriptions from the central computer. That may be quite desirable in certain ailments; but certainly healing is largely a matter of life imparting life, not machines and chemicals dispensing health in do-it yourself packages. The human element of the healing community is central and vital to human health. We cannot afford to mechanise and technologise it, without disastrous consequences to the very structure of human personality. We have to arrest the over-technologisation of diagnosis and therapy, not merely because the technology is expensive; more because it is frighteningly dehumanising.

Sixth, we need to re-examine the near monopoly of the western medical system in the health care ministry. The Chinese are now waking up to this problem and the government is actively promoting Acupuncture, Acupressure, Herbal medicine, and other traditional

Chinese healing systems. In Japan there is a whole movement for activating traditional Chinese and Japanese ways of healing, and to make them more scientific and efficient. The traditional Chinese word for good health 'chi' and its Japanese equivalent 'ki' are being revived and applied to new techniques like acupuncture using laser beams instead of needles (High Genki) and so on. Our own Deepak Chopra in California has managed to hit the New York Times bestseller list with his *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind - A Practical Alternative to Growing Old* (New York, 1993), which not only proposes Yoga and Ayurveda as alternative healing systems, but also proposes a radically new perspective on the human reality and the process of aging and healing. Chopra, a journalist who later was trained as a physician, has quite convincingly argued that the very world-view and view of humanity that prevails in Western Civilisation is at fault for many of the defects of the Allopathic system. The US National Institutes of Health have now (in 1993) by Congressional action, set up a 25 member Advisory Panel and an Office of Alternative Medicine. It seems Deepak Chopra is on the Panel.

Our own central government is not totally inactive in the matter of alternative systems of medicine and healing. The Indian Council of Medical Research is currently examining 30 herbal based substances for possible treatment of AIDS. We have now the prestigious Dhanvantari Award instituted in 1973. In 1975 and 1984 the award went to two Ayurvedic physicians, Dr. Shiv Sharma and Dr. Haridutt Shastri; in 1979 and 1987 it went to two Homoeopaths, Dr. Diwan Harish Chand and Dr. B. N. Chakravarti, and finally to Naturopath J. M. Jussawalla in 1989. There are Yogic/Naturopathic institutes in Delhi, Mongher, Bombay, Poona and Bangalore as well as elsewhere. Even abroad, the University of Turino in Italy, for example, has started Ayurveda courses with Indian collaboration.

Our Vice-President Shri K. R. Narayanan in a speech in Delhi advocated greater priority to traditional medicine (Indian Express 7 August 17, 1994). Dr. Jasbir Singh Bajaj, Member, Planning Commission, recently urged the 450,000 Allopathic doctors registered with the Medical Council of India to join with the 550,000 other healers on the rolls of the Central Council for Indian Medicine. That would

make it a round one million of healers. The response so far from the MCI has been less than enthusiastic, because most western trained medical doctors hold to rather condescending and stereotyped generalisations about other healers.

The Indian Health Ministry has now a special cell for alternative systems of healing, as well as a separate department of Ayurveda with an initial investment of Rs. 26.5 crore. But all this is but a small beginning of the radical process of change required: mainly bringing up the standards in training and practice, and thereby raising the present low standing of alternative medicine; and then starting clinics in urban and rural centres where many systems of therapy are simultaneously available with high quality and low cost, to be chosen in each individual case between patient/patients' people and a diagnostic team functioning at the Clinic, changing the therapy when necessary.

Despite better training facilities for Ayurveda and Homoeopathy, the standards in these alternative systems remain pathetically uneven. Even Ayurveda, badly practised, can do harm, as the present writer has discovered to his hurt. Besides, practitioners of Ayurveda are too easily tempted to use their license to dabble amateurishly in western medicine. Government will have to be more rigorous in monitoring the practice of medicine in all systems. Our Medical education in Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, Acupuncture and Siddha Vaidya will soon have to be brought up to a higher standard in special joint (with western medicine) training centres for these systems; it is absolutely necessary to give some training in these alternative systems to students of Allopathic medicine as well. The latter may be one way of raising the standards everywhere.

Dr. Girija may be exaggerating the problem in her concluding paragraph in the Hindu article cited above:

The writing is on the wall. The current crisis in Western medicine ought to remind us that our blind and continued reliance on this alien system of medicine can only lead to inevitable catastrophe. The only way out of this morass is to beat a hasty retreat and take to our traditional and time-tested systems of health care and medicine which

have stood us in good stead for thousands of years. We can ignore this simple truth only at our own peril.

“Beating a hasty retreat” from Allopathy and “taking to our traditional systems” is not my solution to the problem which is very real. We will have to be more sophisticated than that.

Medical anthropology and theories of health and healing

Seventh, there is the large and difficult question of the theoretical foundations of modern western medicine. Those foundations are difficult to identify, because so much is assumed and so little clearly expressed about it.

The western medical system as we know it, is the product of two centuries of development, the same two centuries when modern science and the present secular civilisation grew up. In fact western medical theory is inseparable from those two factors - first modern science, with its conviction that a proper integration of experience and reflection, using human critical rationality and technological skill, without the aid of Religion or Tradition, gives us full access not only to truth, but also to the manipulation of realities, including the body-mind of human beings, according to our desires and purposes; secondly a secular civilisation in which God has nothing to do with not only medicine and healing, but also with the educational system, with the media including communication, literature and information, and with the newly created institutions and theory of political economy, of statecraft and democratic representation of the people in decision-making as well as of power distribution and regulation.

There is a shared world-view, not based on science, but held by scientists and others, often without critical examination. Deepak Chopra calls it the assumptions which form the bed-rock of our shared world-view, and goes on to list these assumptions thus:

1. There is an objective world independent of the observer, and our bodies are an aspect of this objective world.
2. The body is composed of clumps of matter separated from one another in time and space.

3. Mind and body are separate and independent from each other.
4. Materialism is primary, consciousness is secondary. In other words humans are physical machines that have learned to think.
5. Human awareness can be completely explained as the product of biochemistry.
6. As individuals, we are disconnected, self-contained entities.
7. Our perception of the world is automatic and gives us an accurate picture of how things really are.
8. Our true nature is totally defined by the body, ego and personality. We are wisps of memories and desires enclosed in packages of flesh and bones.
9. Time exists as an absolute and we are captives of that Absolute. No one escapes the ravages of time.
10. Suffering is necessary - it is part of reality. We are inevitable victims of sickness aging and death.

(Ageless, Body, Timeless Mind, op. cit. p. 4)

Deepak Chopra goes on to offer us ten alternative assumptions for “a new paradigm.” These new assumptions of the new paradigm, Chopra admits 7 “are also just creations of the human mind, but they allow us much more freedom and power.” These are “the makings of a new reality, yet all are grounded in the discoveries of quantum physics made almost a hundred years ago.” The seeds of this new paradigm were thus planted by Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg and other pioneers of quantum physics. In other words, the new paradigm which Chopra proposes to us is still a science-based world view; only difference is that it is not the obsolete world view of Newtonian Physics, but the current and modern one of Quantum Physics. I will present to you his ten new assumptions for what they are worth, and then offer my own brief commentary, based both on the new science and the ancient traditions of humanity. Here are the ten new assumptions in Chopra’s own words:

1. The physical world, including our bodies is a response of the

observer. We create our bodies as we create the experience of our world.

2. In their essential state, our bodies are composed of energy and information, not solid matter. This energy and information is an outcropping of infinite fields of energy and information spanning the universe.

3. The mind and body are inseparable one. The unity that is ‘me’ separates into two streams of experience. I experience the subjective stream as thoughts, feelings and desires. I experience the objective stream as my body. At a deeper level, however, the two streams meet at a single creative source. It is from this source that we are meant to live.

4. The biochemistry of the body is a product of awareness. Beliefs, thoughts and emotions create the chemical reactions that uphold life in every cell. An aging cell is the end product of awareness that has forgotten how to remain new.

5. Perception appears to be automatic, but in fact it is a learned phenomenon. The world you live in, including the experience of your body, is completely dictated by how you learned to perceive it. If you change your perception, you change the experience of your body and your world.

6. Impulses of intelligence create your body in new forms every second. What you are is the sum total of these impulses, and by changing their patterns, you will change.

7. Although each person seems separate and independent, all of us are connected patterns of intelligence that govern the whole cosmos. Our bodies are part of universal body, our minds an aspect of a universal mind.

8. Time does not exist as absolute, but only as eternity. Time is quantified eternity, timelessness chopped up into bits and pieces (second, hours, days, years) by us. What we call linear time is a reflection of how we perceive change. If we could perceive the changeless, time would cease to exist as we know it. We can learn to start metabolizing non-change, eternity, the absolute. By doing that,

we will be ready to create the physiology of immortality.

9. Each of us inhabits a reality living beyond all change. Deep inside us, unknown to the five senses, is an innermost core of being, a field of non-change that creates personality, ego and body. This being is our essential state - it is who we really are.

10. We are not victims of aging, sickness, and death. These are part of the scenery, not the seer, who is immune to any form of change. This seer is the spirit, the expression of eternal being.

(Op. cit. pp. 5-7)

Deepak Chopra claims that all of these statements are grounded in the discoveries of quantum physics made almost a hundred years ago. I have difficulty in accepting that claim, for I detect many elements brought in from the ancient tradition of Upanishadic or Vedantic thought. I am not yet ready to accept the agelessness of the body. Neither am I able to phantasize a world within history where no one gets old. At the moment I cannot hear Quantum Physics telling me that the experience of a nonchanging reality lying beyond all change would give me the ability to control change. The name for such claims is not science but speculation. Deepak's problem always seems to be the tendency to be carried away by a little scientific knowledge, into unbridled enthusiasm especially when playing to the American gallery. Hitting the New York Times Bestseller List is no guarantee of the truth of the contents of a book. It means largely that it is written to meet the requirements of an American Bestseller. But there is much in it with which one can enthusiastically agree: mind-body unity, the unity and interconnectedness of all reality, including knower, known and knowledge, that life is essentially a dance, the play of vibrations, the radical and basic unreliability of the five senses and sense-perception, that time-space is not absolute, that causality can be nonlocal or transcending time and space. Science does not prove these things to me. I recognise that presently available scientific data do not generally contradict these convictions.

The Immune System - Key to Healing and Health

The human immune system is the key to the new understanding

of health and healing. But we seem to have inherited distorted perceptions of the function of this system. Our traditional paradigm for understanding the human immune system is that of a well equipped and massive army, armed with white corpuscles and antigens, standing ready to wage battle against any alien invasion in the human body. We conceive the function of the immune system to be basically defensive militantly so.

Our knowledge of the human immune system has grown dramatically in the last couple of decades: first because of the rise and development of a new composite discipline called Psycho-Neuro-Immunology or PNI; second because in the attempt to overcome the rejection by the body of alien organ transplants, medical science had to struggle hard to find ways of suppressing the immune system in order to enable the body to take the transplant. Today we are more ready to see the truth of Deepak Chopra's Vedantic Scientific statement that the subjective and the objective streams of our experience both stem from the common origin of both, the true inner core of our being, which is timeless and unchanging. However that be, it seems now evident that the core of our identity as a unique human being is the immune system, which as the guardian of our unique identity, rejects the "other", the alien transplant. I am indebted to Dr. Verma, former Director of NIMHANS in Bangalore, for that precious insight about the Immune System as the guardian of our unique identity.

But the immune system is more than merely the guard and defender of our unique identity. It is also the Master Healer within us. It is the most technically advanced healing centre in the Universe, equipped with all the tools needed for both diagnosis and therapy, if only we will listen to it and let it do its work. That is the principle on which whole systems like Homeopathy and Naturopathy are based letting the body-mind do its own healing, while we stand by and help in the process by boosting the immune system, by cleansing and detoxification of the body, by providing a wholesome environment for the organism to breathe and live in, and by stimulating and exercising various parts of the body. Everyone knows that the Homeopathic system is totally based on the natural immune system

doing the healing. The same is true to a large extent, of other alternative systems like Acupuncture/acupressure and Pranic Healing as well as Macrobiotics.

Healings as Rectifying Relationships

The major defect of western medicine is its taking the human body in isolation both for diagnosis and therapy. The living human person is a subsystem within a large complex system of relationships. Some of the most obvious elements on which the human subsystem is ever dependent are earth, fire, air and water, trees and animals, rain-clouds, the sun and moon, food and drink, the family ambience, work satisfaction and social acceptance. But western medicine hardly ever takes these into consideration for diagnosis or therapy.

Our inner core which we call the Self, is both a giver and a taker. Alas, too often it tries to take more than it gives. It is greedy and acquisitive, either exploitative or parasitic, either dominating or enslaved, and but seldom caring for others or nurturing the needy; it expects others to fit into one's own world, and when they do not, react violently and in anger or frustration. When relations are ruined, health goes to ruin as well. The greatest source of pathology in the human is the disoriented inner core, bent on making itself the centre of everything, seeking to dominate and exploit all, hating those who do not respond, and ruining relationships.

Healing follows restored and right relationships. The central defect of Deepak Chopra's work is the failure to take relationships as central, and its focussing too heavily on the individual and his/her overcoming aging and sickness, beating entropy and death. One's own inner core is important but it does not exist in isolation from other people's inner cores. True relationship is community, where the centre is not in the one or the other, but in the whole. Not only western medicine, but even Ayurveda and Homeopathy often fail to take this into account. The role of the Christian Confessional in healing was always restoring relationships with others as also with the Transcendent. Its modern secular substitute, Psychoanalysis/Psychotherapy does not always give due importance to restoring right relationships - with others or with the Transcendent.

Attitudes are fundamental for health and healing - attitudes towards oneself, towards Reality as such, towards one's own stress and suffering, but also attitudes to others to their woes and joys, to their ills and sorrows to their welfare and fulfilment.

Conclusion

I am an Eastern Orthodox bishop. My people call me *Hasyo deelan*, which means "Our Healer." True spiritual ministry is the healing of people - body and soul. In our tradition, salvation means healing, giving life where death rules. To save means to make alive. That includes deliverance from not only Hell, but also from the power of death and of evil as well. But not just from a future Hell where the flame is never quenched and the worm dies not. Salvation means also delivering people, and that not just Christians, from present Hell, the hell of stress and anxiety, of guilt and fear of condemnation, of pain and torment in all forms, from disease and sickness, from evil and fear of death.

It is as part of that universal healing ministry that I am committed to the renewal of western medicine on a more genuinely wholistic and human basis, as well as to the revival and revitalisation of traditional systems of healing, so that all systems of healing can be at the service of all humanity, especially of the poor and the marginalised.

In this preliminary consultation, we should look at the whole scenario of diverse healing systems without bias or dogma. We shall be as unsparing in our critique of alternative systems, as of the dominant system. Our basic purpose is the revitalisation and reorientation of all healing systems, and their simultaneous and integrated availability to people, first in a few "Polytherapeutic Healing Centres" on an experimental basis, and later, everywhere in the world.

Mental Factors in Health Care

1. Though mental health, peace and joy are by-products of religious faith, it does not follow that religion is merely a *means* of attaining mental peace. The purpose of religion is to find one's grounding in God, and to work out that faith-grounding through worship and work.

2. The most fundamental problems of human existence are anxiety about the future and a sense of guilt about the past and the present. The two are interconnected. The anxiety factor includes an element of fear of punishment for the sins one committed.

3. The sense of guilt seems also the root of a great deal of hypocrisy, dissimulation, pretension and falsehood. Precisely because I have an anxiety that others may not accept me as I am, I try, unconsciously, to pretend that I am something else, something bigger and better than what I really am. This falseness in its turn creates the anxiety that someone may discover one's true "self." Thus guilt, anxiety, and falseness reinforce each other in human existence.

4. The combination of guilt, anxiety and falseness, seems what lies under the heightened phenomenon of *stress*, (The classical discussion of Stress is in Hans Selye M.D., *The Stress of Life*, (1956), Revised edition, Mc-Graw Hill, 1976) or as it is technically called in medical literature "stress syndrome" or "General Adaptation Syndrome." Medically this relates to disease in which non-specific bodily or mental stress plays a decisive role.

5. The false distinction which medical science itself makes between "bodily" and "mental" in diagnosing the origin (aetiology) of diseases, belongs to the "total stress" of the civilisation which we have now adopted from the west. Its science and knowledge itself have been produced by the stress of a guilt-and-anxiety-laden culture - guilty about its colonial past, atrocities, exploitations, wars, concentration camps and holocausts. Mind and body cannot be thus distinguished. The mind is part, integral part, of a living body, and what affects the body affects the mind, and vice versa. We will not arrive at a healthy society until we overcome this false mind-body dualism, and the regarding of the body as inferior, which is an aspect of Indian culture.

6. The Stress Syndrome or the General Adaptation Syndrome, as described by Dr. Selye, affects the whole body and mind. When the Body-Mind confronts a general stress situation, the kidney has to work extra hard to maintain stability of blood pressure; there are changes in the walls of the arteries; it affects all connective tissues and can lead to inflammation; it affects also the lymphatic cells and eosinophil cells; it causes the pituitary, thyroid and adrenal gland tissues, the liver, the adrenaline medulla, and the whole nervous system, to produce chemical changes. The high incidence of stress and maladaptation of the body-mind system in coping with stress, accounts partially for increases in diseases like high blood pressure, diseases of the heart and blood vessels, diseases of the kidney, eclampsia in pregnant women, rheumatic and rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory diseases of the skin and eyes, allergic and hypersensitivity diseases, sexual derangements, digestive diseases, cancer, and of course nervous and mental diseases. It increases general irritability in men and women and often wreck marriages. It can also create hyper-excitation as well as depression, both of which affect human relations and lead to various bodily and nervous diseases. Impulsive behaviour, emotional instability, inability to concentrate, loss of the joy of life, insomnia, predilection to fatigue, and hypermobility (inability to sit still, be silent, or relax), can all result from stress. And many patients who consult a physician, only to be told that they have no disease, experience even more stress. They feel that they have to prove that they are sick. And this only adds to the general stress syndrome, and could lead to increase in self-medication (pain killers and tranquillisers), increased smoking, loss of appetite, missed menstrual cycles in women, or increased pre-menstrual stress, migraine head-aches, and even alcohol and drug addiction. It makes people more self-hating and accident prone.

7. This brief and non-professional description of the General Adaptation Syndrome accounts for some 60% of the people coming to a hospital for treatment, sometimes with a localized and identifiable symptom but more often without. It is no use telling them that their disease is “psychological.” It has affected their physical body as well as their psychic equipment.

8. The modern doctor recognizes this as a case calling for administering some placebo or palliative, some pink tablet or red 'mixture', and in some cases it works, because the very falling sick and going to hospital help to win the sympathy of the family and to relieve some of the stress.

9. It is at this point that the renewal of the patient's religious faith can very effectively be used as a better cure than the placebo or palliative. It is therefore imperative that at least in all hospitals run under private auspices, and desirably in other hospitals as well, there should be more than just a chaplain or psychiatrist. We need in each major hospital a team of skilled, gifted and well-trained religious counsellors, who can help renew the patient's faith without any pressure to impose the categories of another religion on the patient. If it is a Hindu patient, there are enough resources in the Hindu tradition itself for a substantial evocation of the patient's faith within the categories of the Hindu tradition itself-using the Fita, the Vedas, Upanishads and Hindu rites and forms of worship. The same for a Muslim or a Christian patient. A Christian hospital should not impose a Christian religious categories on a Hindu or a Muslim patient. This is difficult to accept for Christians who have been brain-washed in one or other particular form of Christianity which emphasizes the "sacred duty" of converting everyone to Christianity.

10. I would like to see a Christian hospital taking the initiative in this area, by employing a team of three to five religious counsellors, perhaps starting with two Hindu and two Christians and a Muslim when a suitable person is available. These persons should have some elementary knowledge of the body including the nervous and glandular systems, of pathology, and of psychology, in addition to a good grounding in one's own religious tradition. The Mandiram Hospital and Mandiram Mental Health Centre should do some pioneer work at this point and set a pattern for the other hospitals. I would like to be involved in the earlier stages of pioneering if a decision can be made to proceed in this direction and some funds set aside for the preliminary work. We should look around for a Hindu Chaplain, preferably a young sanyasi with some training in counselling. If necessary appropriate persons should be advertised for, recruited, sent for training in counselling at Vellore, and then given special training locally.

11. I shall conclude this paper by pointing to some of the beliefs and practices directly related to Christianity, but with parallels in other religions, which have direct relevance for mental and physical health. The “beliefs and practices” should not be understood as intellectual ideas or activistic exercises. They belong to a corpus of life within a religions tradition, and therefore demand changes not only in individual minds, but in collective practice as well. Religion should not be reduced to therapy, though the therapeutic function of good religion can never be ignored. Perhaps we should also think about the pathogenic function of bad religion, and make sure that these do not create new problems in the hospital. The kind of religion which the Christian hospital promotes should be therapeutic, healing, wholesome, whether it is Hindu, Muslim or Christian. Some Christian elements are highlighted in the following paragraphs, as a starting point for further discussion.

12. Freedom from anxiety is perhaps the most important single element which must ensue from any healthy religious tradition. In the Christian faith, freedom from anxiety is a consequence of a complete trust in God through Jesus Christ. “Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink” (Mt. 6:25, Lk 12:22). “Do not be anxious about how you are to speak” (Mt. 10:19, MK 13:11, LK 12:11). “Do not be anxious about tomorrow” (Mt. 6:34). These negative injunctions of our Lord have to be transformed into a positive experience for the patient, who has to be helped “to cast all your care on Him, for He cares” (1 Pet. 5:7). Like Martha we are all basically “anxious and troubled” (LK 10:41), and the passage from anxiety to trust is a great healing experience. It is the duty of a hospital to provide opportunities for the patient to find this basic trust, which will remove half of the stress involved.

There are similar sources in other religions. The Gita as a whole is set in the context of Arjuna’s anxiety on the field of battle, and the stress situation. And the Gita solution is in the peroration of Lord Krishna’s words in the 18th chapter of the Gita.

“With the Lord in thy heart take refuge with all thy being;
by His Grace thou shalt attain to the supreme peace and
the eternal standing. Become Me-minded, devoted

to Me, to Me do sacrifice and adoration. Put aside all laws of conduct. Seek refuge in me alone. I will release thee from all sin; do not be sad.”

I am sure that many similar texts can be found in all scriptures.

- 18:62 Tameva Saranam gachcha
 Sarvabhavena Charat
 Tad prasadatparam Santim
 Sthanam Prapyasi Sasvatam
- 65 Mannana Chava mad
 madhaji mam namaskuru
 mamecai shyasi satyam te
 pratijane priyo: si me
- 66 Sarvadarmani parityajaya
 mamekam Saran vraja
 mokshayisyasi aham tva Sarvapapesye
 ma sucha:

13. The Gita passage connects deliverance from anxiety with trust in God and at the same time the acceptance of forgiveness of all sins as a gift of grace from God’s hand. Along with anxiety guilt is the most powerful factor at the root of a great deal of general stress and disease. The heart of the Christian faith is in God’s grace and love which forgives sins and accepts the sinner as son or daughter. God gives forgiveness freely: but we find it difficult to accept that forgiveness; the hardest thing for me is to forgive myself, and to accept the grace of forgiveness. I fear that I will lose my independence if I accept forgiveness, for to acknowledge forgiveness is to recognize a permanent obligation to the forgiver. I would much rather be punished than forgiven; for if I am punished, then I have no further obligation to the one against whom I have sinned. Helping people to accept forgiveness is one of the hardest tasks in patient counselling, and in healing people. The toughest struggle is against sin and guilt. Many Christians who glibly and knowingly talk about sin and guilt and forgiveness in a naive way, (of saying some words of confession and accepting some words of absolution) do not know either the power of guilt or the power of God’s love which overcomes it.

Here both Christian teaching and Hindu doctrine need deepening. Hindu thought finds the source of *papa* in the lower nature - in the *tamo* and *rajo gunas*. These are the desire aspects of the soul - *kama* operating through thought and action at the level of the desire - soul, yielding to passions of the ego, swayed by the unstable plays of the *gunas* in the mind and the will. The purpose of Yoga then is to rise above the level of the desire-soul, to the higher *atman*, which knows itself as divine. Sri Aurobindo defines the Hindu conception of sin in the following words:

“Sin is the working of the lower nature for the crude satisfaction of its own ignorant, dull or violent rajasic and tamasic propensities in revolt against any high self-control and self-mastery of the nature by the spirit.”

(*Essays on the Gita*, Pondicherry, p. 267)

Sri Aurobindo goes on to say that the way “to get rid of this crude compulsion of the being by the lower *prakrti* in its inferior modes ‘is by’ recourse to the highest mode of that *Prakrti*, the Sattwik, which is seeking always for a harmonious light of knowledge and for a right rule of action” (ibid).

This is also Christian ascetic teaching - that the higher aspects of the human spirit, controlled by the divine Spirit, should in turn control the lower aspects of feeling, will and mind, passion and desire and error.

But in order to get going in such a discipline of overcoming the lower elements in me, I need the starting push of grace as forgiveness and the sustaining grace for perseverance. Here both the Christian teaching and the Gita teaching are extremely helpful and the tradition is full of profound insights about overcoming sin and guilt should be taught to the healing team, so that they are able to mediate the deepest mysteries of the tradition to the true seekers. Our usual theology, both Christian and Hindu, are quite superficial. There is a lot of work to be done here in relation to the deeper elements of the Tradition.

14. The third element we spoke about at the beginning is falsity of being, connected with and reinforced by anxiety and guilt. We have

to be very brief here, precisely because even a cursory analysis of falsity in our being would take several pages. Healing comes from removal of falseness, not just in speech, but also in our very pretensions, illusions and attitudes. Here perhaps religion too often encourages falsity, in the form of hypocrisy, sanctimoniousness, and blind prejudices springing from utter selfishness. Only a deep experience of being accepted by God as I am, can release me from the need to pretend. So long as my estimate of myself is based on other people's ideas about me, I will be false. To accept forgiveness at a deep level, removes the need for pretension and hypocrisy. But this is a life-long process, and the skilled healer has to be able to assist the patient at a deep level.

15. One of the manifestations of anxiety, guilt and falsity, can be an acute sense of boredom. People try to overcome this boredom by overwork and drinking; but both are counter-productive, and the boredom becomes deeper and deeper at the subconscious level, and makes people frighteningly unhappy. This is happening to many successful businessmen, managers, and doctors among others. Much of the sickness comes from that terrible combination of non-specific stress and boredom interacting with work-a-holism or alcoholism and the extra stress on body and mind produced by either or both in combination.

Here no other healing is possible except through a deep faith and a comprehensive compassion for all people, especially the suffering and the victims of injustice. The human capacity for feeling, and the human will for doing, as well as the human mind thinking and knowing has to be disciplined together for a life of compassionate understanding of identification with, and curative action to heal, the suffering in own society. This includes socio-economic as well as political study and action. As part of the healing process, the healing team will have to help the patient to find his or her way to make full use of one's mind, will and feeling for the good of others. That is the way to overcome boredom and to find the way to joy.

16. The most important point to be taken into account by religious people concerned about healing cannot be treated here at any length.

This has to do with the socio-economic structures which are at the root of much disease. We need to be concerned not only with the individual patient who comes to the hospital to be healed, but also with the social, economic and political structures which are the cause of such disease. One could also dwell at length on how corruptions in the religious institutions are themselves responsible for much ill health.

17. There is not enough time to speak about the practice of meditation which now has been proved to have tremendous healing powers. I am sure other religious leaders will speak at length about these. I only want to point out that almost any form of meditation, if it does not come out of anxiety and self-condemnation will have healing effects. Practices like Transcendental Meditation have proved to be capable of bringing tranquility to restless spirits and minds. Yoga is the combination of exercise and meditation. Stretching, twisting, reaching and bending are good for body and mind. In Christianity and Islam as well as in Hinduism this is achieved through the religious practice of prostrations (*Kumbidil*, *nisar*, *Sashtangapranam* and *Yogasanas*) as part of daily hours of prayer. Modern research teaches that two hours of standing every day is good for body and mind. Traditional religious practices have incorporated these elements.

But let me issue a warning here. No meditation technique can be developed into a complete religion. Meditation and Yoga are merely methods, instruments, leading to the realisation of truth in wisdom and love. Meditation is for concentration, for deliverance from the distraction of many ideas, many desires, many drives, in order to enable us to seek “the one good thing” which Mary chose, over against Martha who was busy with “many things” (LK 10:41). Meditation helps us to get out of our “thinking” which is the root of much ill-health. To stop thinking and start being still is a very curative technique. Good meditation decreases the restless alpha waves from the brain and increases the more quiet beta and these waves, and better synchronizes the waves from the two hemispheres of the brain.

In spite of all that, meditation cannot solve all problems. If you are interested in a technical critique of the techniques of meditation, I would draw your attention to Chapter 7, entitled “Caveat Meditator”

in Robert E. Ornstein, *The Mind Field A Personal Essay*, (Viking Press, New York, 1976).

“In the absence of anything more highly developed, such programmes impress their followers, and yield great benefits to their leaders.....

From one system, one can learn to relax; from a second, to relate; from a third, to respond.... (But) the primary function of the diverse techniques of meditation is to begin to answer the basic questions of life, such questions as What is the purpose of existence?.... (which) cannot be answered in the same rational, verbal manner as can questions about the nature of the physical, or even social environment, Meditation, then, is ‘a-logical’, intended to defeat the ordinary sequential and analytic approach to problem-solving in situations where this approach is not appropriate” (pp. 87-88).

Meditation is curative, because it helps to move away from the discursive, analytical conceptual frame of mind within which much of the anxiety functions. But religion itself cannot be reduced to any meditation technique. And if one thinks that only meditation techniques have value in healing, one is selling good religion very much short.

The Healing Ministry of the Church

It was my privilege some years ago to dine at High Table in the Hall of Christ Church, Oxford. Sitting next to me was the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. As conversation had to begin, I asked him: “What is the most significant and promising area of research in medicine today at Oxford?” The answer came without much hesitation: “The relation between body and mind in the cause and cure of disease.”

The Platonic and Stoic traditions are deeply entrenched in Christian thought. For the Stoics, the body was a microcosm reflecting the cosmos. In Alexander Pope’s words:

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole
Whose body Nature is, and God the Soul.”

In the microcosm, the body, working according to a law which is written into it by the Logos or Reason, encloses the Soul. For the Platonists, the body was parallel to matter, and the soul to form. But body and mind, even to a Christian thinker like Augustine, were two separate entities, the former inferior to the latter. Mind is immortal, whereas body is mortal, according to Augustine. The mind has “a nature of its own” and is a “substance.” The soul is “prior” to the body and non-spatial (*On the Immortality of the Soul*, 17, 24).

The tendency to think thus of mind and body as two distinct, though inseparable, entities seems deep-rooted in the human tradition. One finds basically the same thought in Buddhist documents coming from an earlier period. The Surangama Sutra (Sanskrit, ca. 1st Century A.D.) after a very involved and sophisticated discussion, separates the body from the mind, placing the latter in the category of eternal essences and regarding the body as something merely spatio-temporal.

Both Western and Eastern cultures developed early a ‘scientific’ approach to medicine. In the beginning of our era, before the advent of Christianity, there were great physicians both in the East and the West. Hippocrates and Galen in the West were paralleled in India by Charaka and Susruta and later Vagbhata. The Indian treatise

Charakasamhita, coming from the early centuries of our era, deals in eight chapters with (i) major surgery, (ii) minor surgery, (iii) healing of internal diseases, (iv) casting out demons, (v) children's diseases, (vi) toxicology, (vii) elixirs, and (viii) aphrodisiacs. The Ashtanga-sangraha of Vagbhata is now being taught in Ayurvedic Colleges of Medicine in Mysore and elsewhere. China has a long and honourable history of medicine. Egypt developed a sophisticated medicine and surgery millennia before Christ. Mesopotamian medicine was highly developed in the time of Hammurabi. It is only on the basis of an unduly limited amount of information that one can say, as some modern writers do, that surgery was the result of dedivinization of the human body brought about by the Gospel.

In both scientific approaches, however, there was this tendency to take the body as a distinct organism with its own laws, not directly related to the mind. The mind was open to deception and demon-possession but not to disease. Nor were mental factors seriously taken into account in medical aetiology and pathology.

To put it bluntly, the temptation of the cultured or 'scientific' man is to regard disease as a biological fact alone, and therefore as something to be dealt with biologically. But the *bios*, of which biology is the science, is gradually becoming recognized to include not only the body, but also the *psyche* (the soul).

There is yet another separation which has been more characteristic of the West than of the East, namely that between thought and feeling. This has not always been so, even in the West. As Professor R. B. Onians points out in his *Origins of European Thought*,¹ in the Homeric literature, thought and feeling are themselves bodily actions, both intimately connected with the physical body.

For a detailed history of *Body and Mind in Western Thought*, the reader is invited to consult the rewarding summary by Dr. Joan Reeves in her Pelican book of that title (1958).

In the Eastern Patristic tradition, however, one finds an approach which is more directly incarnational, and while heavily influenced by the Greek classical tradition, yet shows a more comprehensive and fruitful line. Here is Gregory of Nyssa in *On the making of man*:

“The purpose of our argument was to show that the mind is not restricted to any part of the Body, but is equally in touch with the whole, producing its motion according to the nature of the part which is under its influence. There are cases, however, in which the mind even follows the bodily impulses, and becomes, as it were, their servant; for often the bodily nature takes the lead by introducing either the sense of that which gives pain or the desire for that which gives pleasure, so that it may be said to furnish the first beginnings...”

“Neither is there perception without material substance, nor does the act of perception take place without the intellectual faculty...”

“The mind is not confined to any one part of us, but is equally in all and through all, neither surrounding anything without, nor being enclosed within anything: for these phrases are properly applied to casks or other bodies that are placed one inside the other; but the union of the mental with the bodily presents a connection unspeakable and inconceivable - not being *within* it (for the incorporeal is not enclosed in a body), nor yet surrounding it without (for that which is incorporeal cannot enclose something within it), but the mind approaching our nature in some inexplicable and incomprehensible way, and coming into contact with it, is to be regarded as both in it and around it, neither implanted in it nor enfolded with it, but in a way which we cannot speak or think, except so far as this, that while the nature (*phusis*) prospers according to its own order, the mind is also operative; but if any misfortune befalls the former, the movement of the mind halts correspondingly.”²

Here two things are clearly noted, which seem to be not clearly recognized by Augustine, who was trained in the same classical tradition (though in its Latin version).

First, while Augustine also recognizes the inseparability of the body and soul, he is more inclined to regard the body as in some sense containing the soul, the soul being the captain of the ship of the body. The re-interpretation of the relation between body and mind is an important clue to the restoration of Christian healing in our tie, as much as to an authentic doctrine of Christian worship and obedience.

Second, and perhaps more important, Gregory recognises the essential mystery of the body-mind relationship, a problem to which many solutions have been offered in the centuries following, without finding wide acceptance. It is important for the Church's healing ministry to have a grasp of this central mystery of human existence, which comes up as a perennial problem in the history of Western thought.

Modern Western medicine is very young, a product of the Enlightenment, optimistic about its own capacity to understand, tempted to regard every mystery as ultimately reducible to a problem or a puzzle to be solved by the human mind, and mechanistic in its basic understanding of reality.

Bacteriology is hardly a hundred years old, and it is the key to modern medicine. Most of our knowledge of physico-chemical causes of diseases come from this century. University level medical training is a phenomenon that began to develop only after 1910 in the North American continent.

The Church must develop a more balanced and not over enthusiastic attitude towards the dominance of this young science in our understanding of human disease. Disease and healing cannot be understood apart from their physical causes, but to understand them in a purely physical sense is to misunderstand them dangerously.

The recognition of this integral relation between *soma* and *psyche* is the necessary preliminary step towards a proper perspective on the healing ministry of the Church. Otherwise we are in danger of thinking of medical missions as in some sense secondary to the proper task of evangelism. Healing of disease is neither a *praeparatio evangelica*, nor a work of charity which follows the preaching of the Gospel.

Such a view has at least the following eight consequences:

a) Medical missions cannot be construed as a *means* to draw people to the Church, so that they can later be addressed with the Gospel.

b) The healing ministry is no longer an *optional* element in the

total ministry of the Church. Salvation means healing of the totality of man.

c) The healing ministry of the Church is not adequately exercised when the Church runs hospitals which use the highly fruitful, though only partially adequate, *techniques* of modern medical science.

d) 'Faith healing', which has received scant attention and often contemptuous rejection at the hands of modern theology and modern medicine, should come in for a fresh appraisal. Healing services, prayers for the sick and anointing of the sick should receive fresh study.

e) If healing of the lame, the blind, the paralytic and the mentally ill had the function of a "sign of the Kingdom" in the New Testament, we need to rediscover the ways in which this can be the case in our time.

f) Certain special areas of medical mission which cater both to mental and physical health should receive priority in the work of the Church: e.g. psychiatric and medical social work, expert pastoral counselling engaged in by clergy and laity, mental and physical hygiene in rural and urban communities, diseases caused or intensified by anxiety, guilt, fear, loneliness, hatred and other 'mental' causes, etc.

g) Stimulus to medical research itself, by providing opportunities for qualified Christian and non-Christian medical practitioners to consider together the mental and social causes of illness, and to carry through social legislation and the establishment of programmes conducive to the prevention and cure of ill-health in society.

h) The organization of Medical Associations and nurses' associations, for constantly keeping the medical profession in dialogue with social, psychological and theological thinking, and for helping doctors and nurses as well as all Christians to be aware of their common responsibility for the health and well-being of society.

* * * * *

"If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his

commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord, your healer” (Exodus 15:26).

The connection between sin and sickness needs more careful study. This is not to be treated in an individual framework, though the relation between the individual’s sickness and his sin should not be ignored. Obedience to the Lord God, or a dynamic righteousness in society, is the inescapable pre-condition for the health of man in society.

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and heal their land” (II Chron. 7:14) said Yahweh to Solomon at the dedication of the Temple.

Repentance, and the consequent experience of God’s forgiving grace, in a corporate as well as an individual context, form parts of the healing ministry of the Church.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
Who forgives all your iniquity,
Who heals all your diseases.* (Ps. 103:2-3)

*Repent, O ye sons of wavering,
I shall heal you from your wavering* (Jer. 3:22).

The leaves of the “tree of life” are for “the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:22).

This close relation between repentance and healing has practical implications in our time. Corporate and personal repentance has to be provided for in the life and worship of the Church. The ‘sacrament’ of confession needs to be reinstated in a meaningful form in all the churches. The penitential prayers in our corporate worship have to be made more realistic and relevant. Deep-seated sin and guilt in our subliminal consciousness has to be brought up and dealt with. Nations themselves have to be made strong enough to confess their national sins, both internally and in relation to the other nations.

The Eucharist, the “medicine of immortality”, should become a true healing agent in the life of the congregations. This applies equally to Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches.

The Church should seek also to eliminate social and personal injustice in society, in order that the healing of the nations may become a reality. The congregation should promote mutual reconciliation and acceptance within itself, so that it may become a genuinely healing and forgiving community, not an association of morbid pietists or of escapist activists.

As for the institutional aspect of the medical ministry, a Christian hospital should be characterized (not necessarily through having a majority of baptized Christians on its staff) by:

- a) An atmosphere of warm affection, joy and personal concern.
- b) Pastoral care for the total well-being of the patients, but not through using the depressed situation of the patient as an opportunity for evangelism-medical social workers may have a role to play even in the hospital.
- c) Special care for the poor.
- d) High level of technical efficiency, equipment and competence.
- e) A central core community of Christian professionals, on the staff, dedicated to making it an authentically Christian institution, with a discipline of corporate worship, discussion and leadership.
- f) Close but informal connection with qualified and specially chosen and trained people in the congregations in the area (on an ecumenical pattern) who take an active interest in all the patients in the hospital, visit them and care for them.

1. Cambridge, 1951, p. 3ff.

2. LNPF, Series Two, Vol. V, p. 402ff.

Reshaping Health Care

The International Consultation on Medical Anthropology and Alternative Systems of Healing brought together some 50 healers and thinkers from various countries including USA, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, India, Oman and Tibet, for a consultation at the Hotel Raj Hans, Surajkund, Haryana (near New Delhi), India, from February 20th to 27th, 1995. The Consultation had four major objectives:

a. to make a preliminary assessment of the views of reality and perceptions of what constitutes a human person as implied or expressed in various healing systems developed by different cultures of the world. This, rather than any particular academic discipline is what was meant by the term “medical anthropology”;

b. a cursory examination of the development of modern western medicine, and of the reasons why more and more people are turning away from the western medical system of Allopathy and resorting to traditional healing systems or to Homeopathy for their health care needs;

c. an assessment of the state of Traditional Healing Systems and Homeopathy; and exploring ways and means to make the immense wealth of these rich traditions more easily and effectively accessible to people;

d. to suggest changes in existing patterns of health care and to make other suggestions and recommendations to governments, private sector enterprises related to healing, to the healing profession, to voluntary organisations and to the general public.

We had the benefit of a rich input in the form of presentations, demonstrations and discussions. The free consultation clinics in Ayurveda, Unani, Homeopathy, the Japanese system of Jorei, Naturopathy, Yoga, Tibetan Medicine, Russian Traditional medicine, Pranic Healing, High Genki, Acupressure and Massage techniques were utilised by participants as well as by hundreds of visitors from Delhi and Haryana. Participants thus had an opportunity to observe

the actual practise of Traditional Systems of Healing and Homeopathy, in addition to hearing some highly informative presentations on the various systems of Healing. They also saw how widespread was the public interested in these Traditional Healing Systems and Homeopathy.

We were graciously received by the great Sikh Guru and Healer, Baba Virsa Singhji Maharaj, and the hour we spent in his presence at the Gobind Sadan, Mehrauli, New Delhi, was itself a healing experience for most of us. Among many other precious insights which he gave us in that hour, Babaji also told us:

“If we see clearly, we can see that humans are the most poisonous of all creatures. ... When we hate or when anger and bitterness burns within us, we emit poison into the world and pollute it. ... When our thoughts are poisoning us, how can medicine help? When we purify our thoughts, when loving compassionate service motivates us, when we meditate deeply, not only our own bodies and spirits, but also the whole world will be cleansed, and people will be more healthy... If anger and hatred leave us, we can save millions on armaments as well.”

In his erudite inaugural address, the Government of India’s Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. C. Silvera said,

“As a system Allopathy has its own plus points. But it has certain obvious pitfalls as well. The cost factor, non-availability to a vast majority of the people, hospital-induced illness, over-use of chemicals in pharmacopeia and prescriptions, indiscriminate use of antibiotics, the over-technologisation of both diagnosis and therapy, and consequent impersonalization of healing are some of these.”

The Minister announced that “very soon a separate Department for Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy will be created under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.” This new Department will seek among other things:

(a) the upgrading of colleges for training personnel for Indian Systems of Medicine.

(b) the setting up of four drug testing laboratories for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.

(c) research revitalisation in these systems.

(d) exposing practitioners of these systems to the National Health Programme through three-week courses, and

(e) the setting up of at least one Specialised Hospital in each state, for the practice of these systems, on the lines of Allopathic hospitals.

The Minister continued to stress the drawbacks in the present situation, including the inadequate level of training administered in colleges for these systems, their insufficiently developed theoretical framework, practice by healers of substandard training, tonics and patent medicines not conforming to standard or even to the labels. He said:

“However, there is no gainsaying the fact that we need to enforce stricter standards than is presently the case. Let me assure you that this is an issue to which my Ministry will address itself with all seriousness.”

We were served a rich feast of knowledge and wisdom in the form of papers and presentations, including the Presidential address of the Co-Chairperson, Prof. R. M. Verma, former Director of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Sciences, the incredibly rich keynote address by Prof. Srinath Reddy of the Department of Cardiology of The All India Institute of Medical Science, the thought-provoking addresses by Prof. Manmohan Singh of Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, the deep insights Prof. J. S. Neki, the leading Indian Guru of Psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine and many others. Leading intellectuals like Smt. Kapila Vatsyayan, Sri. Chaturvedi Badrinath, Prof. Anil Gupta and others enriched the discussion by their responses to the main addresses.

Reality-Perception or Conceptual Structure

We saw that almost all traditional healing systems had their origin in a cultural milieu where religion had not been banished from the public arena to the margins of privatisation or individualism. In fact world view of most of these systems was deeply rooted in spiritual/religious perceptions of the universe and its transcendent origins; the human person was always an integral aspect of that cosmos, not a subject standing outside the world, trying to view it as an object.

The universal Aboriginal or Adivasi Culture in all continents, (Tribal, African, Native American, Siberian, Chinese or Indian) was one where humans felt close to earth and sky, to air and water to trees and animals - participating fully with them in the cosmic community. We of the urban-technological civilization would appear to have lost most of that sense of intimacy and community. In fact it is still there in our blood and in our genes, dormant, inactive, but not yet extinct; it needs only to be reawakened and rekindled. Appreciation and practice of Traditional Systems of Healing and Homeopathy will be easier in a culture which regains some of that Primal Vision of our ancestors, irrespective of where on the globe we live today.

When we come to the world's great religions, which have been the matrix of most of the traditional healing systems, we are struck by the fact that most of the world's religions, and therefore the traditional healing systems integral to them, are of Asian origin: East Asian, South Asian or West Asian: Taoism, Shintoism, Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism of East Asian provenance; Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism and Sikhism of South Asian origin; and Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam from West Asia, with a large contribution from Egypt in Africa and Greece in Europe.

All traditional healing systems, including the western traditional or Greek, operate within one more of these religions, sharing their world view, quite often transcending the limits of any one religion. Ayurveda in India for example predates the division of the Indian heritage into Jain, Buddhist and Hindu; it takes eclectically from many philosophical systems - Sankhya, Nyaya-Vaisesika, Jaina, Buddhist, according to need, but the relation to the Cosmos or the Transcendent is never

obscured. Even the western or Greek system was never totally secular: Pythagoreanism - Platonism, the Orphic-Apollonian-Dionysian cults and other Mystery Religions were in the background of Hippocrates and Galen, Asclepiades and Alcibiades (most of the Greeks were from Asia Minor), Herophilus and Erasistratus. The Unani system is a typical case of Jewish-Greek-Christian-Muslim, confluence.

When we come to modern western medicine, there is a fundamental change in this outlook. There is a crisis in our health care system centered in Allopathy. This crisis is, in fact, a crisis of culture. Allopathy is a product of a particular culture and bears its marks.

The Evolution of Western culture and Western Medicine

Some understanding of the transition of Europe from the Medieval Christian (Roman Catholic) culture to the Modern Secular culture is necessary if we want to come to terms with what looks like an apparent conflict between Modern Western medicine on the one hand and Traditional Healing Systems and Homeopathy on the other.

Medieval Christendom (ca 800 to ca 1750) was, at least on the surface, a homogeneous religious culture, with the authority of the Church (after the Protestant Reformation of 1517 ff, of the Church and the Bible, but still of some form of western Christianity) ruling supreme at least in theory. Enormous socio-economic and anti-clerical conflicts simmered under the calm-looking surface of a society which had suddenly become affluent, through trade, piracy, colonialism and imperialism. The old structures of a feudal society were already coming apart at the seams, with the advance of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie as the newly dominant class replacing the feudal barons and nobles.

It was in this context that in 18th century Europe and later in America, a process called "Secularisation" spread, overthrowing the control of the Church over property, ideas and institutions, including medical and educational institutions run by monks and priests - the 13th century medical schools in Salerno and Montpellier, Paris and

Bologna, Padua and Leiden. Great theological-spiritual masters like the monk Roger Bacon and the Abbot Albertus Magnus (teacher of Thomas Aquinas) were also great physicians. Other great healers were attached to Popes and Kings. Secularisation took medicine away from the Church and the monks, and established the foundations of a medical system without conscious grounding in any religious world view.

The decisive event of this process was what we call the European Enlightenment, one of whose great symbols was the French Revolution in 1789 with its slogan of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, directed against the church's domination, inequality and paternalism. The European Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries boldly asserted the freedom and autonomy of the individual, against the unfreedom and theonomy or heteronomy of religion and tradition. In pre-18th century European Christendom, religious notions like the Kingdom of God provided the basic framework for unifying all experience. This religious authority and tradition is what Secularisation and the Enlightenment totally and completely repudiated as an affront to the freedom and autonomy of the human person.

The unifying principle of all experience was no longer to be supplied by religion or tradition; human reason was its own authority over which the Enlightenment would acknowledge no higher authority. Human rationality was capable of grasping reality and transforming it to serve humanity's interests. It was in this milieu that modern science and technology were born; modern western medicine, based on science and technology, was also born in this matrix of repudiating all authority outside of human rationality, rejecting practically all agency except human agency. Science, the major instrument of human rationality, and technology as tool for human control of the world, together became now the unifying principle of experience. What was not knowable by the methods of science was not knowledge in this view. Everything that needs to be done can somehow be accomplished by technological know-how. Man is the Supreme Healer, knowing and handling the human body like other objects, through modern science and the technology based on it.

This meant also the marginalisation of art, philosophy and religion as knowledge-gathering and communicating symbol systems. The new Positivist Philosophy, articulated by Auguste Comte, affirmed that all European knowledge, and therefore by extrapolation all human knowledge, has passed through three progressive stages of development: the theological-religious, the philosophical-metaphysical, and finally the scientific-positive. Only the last was true adult knowledge because it was not dependent on any external authority; the theological/religious belonged to the infancy of humanity; the philosophical/metaphysical belonged to humanity's adolescence. The adult, in order to affirm his/her own freedom and authority, must abandon what belonged to the child and the adolescent.

For western science, till recently, Traditional Systems of Healing belonged to that childhood or adolescence of humanity, and are to be assigned to the outer margins of civilised society, where people without modern education and scientific thinking, and therefore without the benefit of the European Enlightenment and its rationality, live-in non-western cultures, in the lower uneducated classes of western society, and so on. If anything in the Traditional Systems of Healing is to be accepted by adult, free human beings, they had to be tested on the anvil of scientific rationality and experimental validation.

We should acknowledge the fact that modern western medicine, even when based on the Cartesian-Mechanistic-Reductionist model, has enormous successes to its credit. It has liberated humanity, at least in some measure, from its fear of unknown and unknowable external or internal forces like superstition, fatalism, karma, and demonic agencies. It has overcome epidemics and contributed to longer life expectancy. Many diseases, previously thought incurable, have been brought under partial control.

Allopathy acknowledges, at least in theory, its origins in Hippocratic thought and practice. It has, however come to neglect some of the main themes of Hippocratic medicine: e.g. health as a state of balance, the importance of environmental influences, body-mind interdependence, nature's inherent healing power. Instead it chose the Cartesian model, which is dualistic, reductionist and mechanistic.

It separated body and mind, assigning the body to physicians and surgeons, and the mind to psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. It saw the body on the analogy of a machine composed of different parts, and attributed disease to organ dysfunctions or invasions by bacteria which had to be exterminated. Diagnosis and therapy were based on simplistic single cause explanation, leading to treatment of that single cause. This single cause-effect understanding was reinforced by developments in laboratory medicine and medical technology. The cost of treatment arose enormously as medical technology advanced. There was failure to recognize fully the inter-dependence of body-mind-environment, and to understand the human person as subsisting only in relation to various other subsystems which affected illness and wellness.

The system was tardy in recognising and nurturing the inherent healing powers in nature and in the human body. Excessive use of antibiotics led to unexpected consequences, like reduced resistance to disease, enfeeblement of the immune system and the rise of strains of new bacteria resistant to all known antibiotics and hence as lethal as AIDS. The pace of increasing sophistication and complexity in diagnostic technology not only raises health care costs to exorbitantly high levels, but also progressively marginalises the physician-patient interaction, so essential to health and healing. The proliferation of often unnecessary chemical drugs, combined with the overuse of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, food preservatives and detergents, increases toxicity in the human body and lowers the general health level of people. We note that in certain countries, some pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies and some medical professionals together constitute a highly exploitative and unjust "health business." These are factors that urgently call for remedy and rectification in western medicine.

At the same time there have been many positive developments in the theory and practice of modern western medicine. The growth of epidemiology as a discipline and public health as a service have led to a better recognition of the multifactorial and interactive approach to illness and health, taking social, environmental and even cultural factors into account. The emphasis on preventive medicine, on

community health delivery, and the “health for the millions” approach have helped broaden out the perceptions of western medicine into nutritional practices and environmental factors. The new emphasis on “life-style related diseases” helped the understanding of heart diseases, cancer, diabetes, mental illness and other stress related disorders. The role of diet, exercise and relaxation techniques is now better recognised. Socio-economic deprivation as a major contributor to ill-health, links health care today with the wider aspects of the political economy. The recent emergence of evolutionary epidemiology draws attention to the factor of cultural change and the consequent erosion of the protective practices of the old cultures as a major cause of ill-health and epidemics.

Technology itself has helped in the unravelling of the complex interplay of myriad interdependent systems in the body and in the world, from cell to cosmos, which keep a person healthy. Psychosomatic medicine and Psychoneuro immunology emerging as new inter-disciplinary systems of knowledge and the emergence of bio-feedback technology, have revealed how the mind and will affect the body through neurohumoral influences and by mental states.

There is a growing recognition of the role of faith and spirituality in health and healing. The power of prayer to heal is now well documented.

All these combine to initiate some radical changes in modern western medicine, bringing it closer to the reality perceptions of the Traditional Systems of Healing. There is a new paradigm emerging—one that integrates the physical, mental, environmental, social, and spiritual domains. Its articulation is progressing very slowly; the conception itself is still in evolution. Medical Anthropology, or our understanding of how the human person functions in relation to the rest of the universe, calls for clearer formulation, incorporating the role, not only of science, but also of art, philosophy and religion, in health and healing.

As this paradigm shift grows to maturity, we can expect a creative regeneration in modern western medicine. This process will not take place independently of a better understanding of and co-operation

with Traditional Systems of Healing; it will also facilitate that necessary understanding and co-operation in the interests of the health and well-being of the whole of humanity.

The Present and Future of Traditional Systems of Healing

It is by no means easy to produce an exhaustive list of the Traditional Systems of Healing. We want first to suggest that we abandon the use of the term “Alternative Systems of Healing”. It seems to imply that one system, namely Allopathy, is normative and the others are simply alternatives.

When we speak of “Traditional Systems of Healing” we mean the traditions of healing and health care of all cultures - of China and Japan, of India and Tibet, of the Arab World, of Europe and the Americas, of all of Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. We should include Homeopathy, though it is rather modern in origin. We also include a plethora of newly emerging healing systems - e.g.; Pranic Healing, Jorei, High Genki, Reflexology, Magnetology, Cheiropractic, Osteopathy, Cranio-Sacral Therapy and so on, all of which seem to have some roots in Ancient Traditions.

We note the growing recognition of TSH (Traditional Systems of Healing) by Allopathy, and the selective and partial incorporation of some of its techniques into Allopathic medicine as an adjunct to it. This is not what matters, however, from the perspective of the people’s health needs. We are convinced that the resuscitation and promotion of Traditional Systems in their own right is absolutely necessary for the welfare of humanity; we affirm that we cannot begin to meet the health needs of the whole of humanity without the aid of TSH.

The TSH have a claim for preferential treatment, because

- a. they are community based and have already a strong manpower base, which includes trained healers as well as local or tribal health practitioners;
- b. they rely primarily on local resources like flora, fauna and minerals;
- c. they are cost effective and within reach of ordinary people;

- d. the possibility for commercialisation and exploitation is much less in these systems compared to western medicine; though high vigilance is required to ensure that as the people's awareness of and demand for these systems go up, commercial establishment will certainly exploit them for profit;
- e. their side effects are much less, and properly controlled, they do less damage to humanity's health and well-being;
- f. they are well integrated with culture specific life styles, while generally being holistic in their approach to health care.

It is a fact however that TSH have been surviving for the past two hundred years on the margins of public life. The European Enlightenment and its secular civilizations banished them from the official public arena, along with all tradition and all religion. Allopathy which conformed to the standards of western science took over the centre of the public health care system.

No marginalised community can live and flourish normally; this is true for women, for Adivasis and Aborigines, for Blacks and Native Americans; it is true also for religion which has not done well in the past two hundred years as compared to earlier periods. Traditional Healing Systems were cast out, along with the religions which were their matrix.

Prolonged marginalisation distorts everything; TSH are no exception. The state gives primary attention to the Allopathic system, casting an occasional crumb from its sumptuous tables to the household pets of TSH. Their potential is not recognised or sufficiently utilised in primary health care or in hospitals and systems of training medical and paramedical personnel. With the waning of State recognition and support, some people lose confidence in their own healing traditions. Allopathic physicians and nurses, by virtue of their training school education, tend to look down on the practitioners of TSH. On the other hand there is a groundswell of new demand for these Traditional Systems on the part of people everywhere. Their respect for these systems is growing.

What should we do to bring these TSH back to life and help them

fulfil their true function? First, we need to do certain things both for TSH and also for Allopathy:

- a. confirm and reaffirm what is good and should in these systems;
- b. remove what is distorted in systems and restore them to their original authenticity;
- c. complete what remains incomplete in the light of experience and new knowledge, especially by learning from one another.

A major problem in relation to TSH was that of standards for training practitioners and their licensing or accreditation. The traditional method in these systems is apprenticeship or *guru-sishya-parampara*, or handing over the knowledge from teacher to disciple, in a system where theory and practice are never separated. This system is difficult to practise on a large scale, when there is need for thousands of practitioners to bring health care to people.

Training in TSH therefore can be best achieved in small scale participatory teacher-student patterns in the setting of local cultures. However, large scale colleges for Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Unani, Siddha, Naturopathy, Yoga therapy, Chinese Medicine and other systems are already in existence. These institutions now seek to imitate the pattern of Allopathic medical schools; sometimes even the subjects and text books of Allopathy are utilised. The end result is major distortions in the authenticity of the TSH.

One thing we notice is that each system remains in isolation. The practitioner of one system knows very little about other systems. This defect should be remedied at the training stage itself, by short courses for exposure to other systems, preferably in the latter's clinics and institutions. The curriculum of Allopathic medical schools should definitely include such exposure to TSH. But the same has to be done in the training programme of each Traditional System as well.

Multisystem Healing Centres

We saw the need for culturally adapted multi-system healing centres in all countries and all regions of each country. Some of the existing clinics and hospitals could incorporate more systems into

their present structure. The multi-system centres could be designed in such a way that there is creative interaction between the various systems. A multi-system diagnostic team could screen each person coming for healing and assign a suitable programme of treatment in one or more systems, according to need and preference. It is desirable that large buildings are avoided, regimentation reduced to a minimum and convivial living conditions provided for all, preferably in open country, in sylvan settings where possible, plenty of gardens and open spaces provided, with flowing streams and winding lanes and clubs and cafes for creative interaction among patients and healers. Costs have to be kept as low as possible, so that ordinary people can benefit from them. State and private sector subsidies should be sought and utilised; especially to help the poor.

These centres can also play a central role in gathering information and establishing a data base about the efficacy, safety and cost of the various systems. They could besides serve as internship hospitals for trainees in various systems. In some cases these centres can also undertake or promote research in the various systems. They can also serve as referral centres for patients from other centres. Such centres can co-operate with other similar centres, so that each can learn from the other.

One question which seemed central is the extent to which the standards of modern science should be applied to the testing of Traditional Systems.

What Constitutes Valid Evidence for Efficacy and Safety of any System?

It is clear that all healing systems should be tested for their efficacy and safety. This applies to the Allopathic system as well. We were told of the Weinberg study, according to which only 20% of the cures effected in allopathy can be attributed to the treatment applied, 30% is placebo effect, 25% due to some form of catharsis, and the remaining 25% due to what is called the X-Factor, which may include faith and prayer. Whatever be the validity of this report, it is clear that strict laboratory evidence cannot be obtained for all these factors involved in healing. In the case of all systems, whether Allopathy or

Traditional, the following principle can guide our thinking about efficacy and safety.

1. All systems should be evaluated and assessed, in ways appropriate to each system, for their efficacy and safety, before they can be licensed or used in the public health care system.
2. The causal connection between the treatment and its beneficial outcome may not always be traceable accurately. This may be due to limits in our theoretical understanding or in our investigational tools. Our inability to trace the causal chain should not however lead to rejection of healing methods of proven efficacy.
3. Any evaluation process should give more importance to patient-relevant outcomes like survival, well-being, functional state, and self-care possibilities than to physician-relevant outcomes like clinical or laboratory indicators. Pre-treatment and post-well being measurements of measurable aspects should also be gathered and studied wherever possible.
4. Documentation should include cases of success in treatment as well as of failure and fatalities.
5. Comparative clinical trials may in some cases be used to test the efficacy of various systems.
6. Comparative cost-effectiveness assessments should also be used in testing usability of various systems.
7. Careful documentation about experiences of groups of persons could also be studied to supplement the assessment of various systems.
8. The internal criteria of one system cannot be applied in the assessment of other systems.

Recommendations

We address our modest suggestions and recommendations to governments, intergovernmental bodies, to voluntary agencies and international non-governmental agencies, to Corporations and

Insurance companies, to professional healers, to the general public to the communications media.

To National Governments

1. Many governments recognize only a few selected Traditional Systems of Healing for support and promotion; we recommend that they should seek to be as inclusive as possible, and not to neglect the scores of systems now coming back to life, including traditional Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Native American and Indian systems, as well as the newly emerging systems like Craniosacral Therapy, Macrobiotics, Reflexology, Magnetology and so on. Governments directly or through other public bodies should evaluate and assess by appropriate methods the efficacy and safety of all systems, and take into consideration their easy availability to people as well as cost factors.

2. In setting up or supporting high quality training centres for the various systems, special attention should be given to the culture-specific ambiance of each system. Most traditional systems do better in small scale settings and rural conditions. Since their future participation in nation-wide health programmes is in view, the urban setting is often uncongenial.

3. Governments should promote or establish testing facilities and centres appropriate to each system for the continuing monitoring of quality and standards of pharmaceuticals and other medical products in traditional systems. No product should be sold in the market without certification of quality.

4. Governments should set up or promote high quality multisystem healing centres, where there is co-ordination and continuous interaction among the various systems. These new institutions should be centres of comparative study, of multi-system treatment, evaluation, standard-setting for accreditation, documentation and research, for Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy and Emerging New Systems.

5. Governments should fund and promote research in Traditional Systems of Healing, using also the multi-system centres and testing

facilities. Research in TSH, when attached to Allopathy dominated institutions should not remain at the margins of the programme of such institutes, but should promote continuous interaction among TSH and Allopathy.

6. Governments should legislate for proper monitoring of TSH products and for the licensing and registration of TSH practitioners. Norms of training and qualification should be established and strictly implemented, suitably disciplining violators and malpractitioners. Governments should also pass and enforce appropriate legislation to regulate the large scale export of the herbal resources of the country.

To the World Health Organisation and Other UN Agencies

1. WHO should initiate effective programmes for the comparative study and assessment of the world-wide use of Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy and Emerging New Therapies, which are all already playing a major role in the health care of the people.

2. WHO should support the setting up of a World Association of Traditional Healers, on the patterns of the existing CIOMS which brings together national health associations. To this end the WHO should encourage member governments who have not already done so, to set up national associations of traditional healers in each country.

3. Other UN agencies like UNICEF, UNDP etc should take into account the role of Traditional Systems of Healing in supporting development programmes and projects, and especially in caring for the health of infants and mothers.

4. WHO should take initiatives to promote creative interaction between Allopathy and Traditional Healing Systems, as well as to promote the recognition and use of TSH in all countries in order to fulfil its own commitment to “Health for the Millions by the Year 2000” (Alma Ata Declaration, 1978).

To the General Public, and Especially to Voluntary Agencies and Non government Organisations

1. High Priority should be given to awareness building among the general public, first about the basic factors contributing to human

health and well-being (Health Awareness Programmes), and secondly about the existence, efficacy and availability at low cost of Traditional Systems of Healing.

2. Every effort should be made for maximising the use of TSH in primary health care and in urban and rural health delivery systems.

3. Support should be given for the starting of multi-system healing centres in urban and rural areas.

4. A meeting of all voluntary organisations and NGOs working in the field of health should be convoked to consider ways and means of promoting TSH.

5. Take initiatives for setting up international and national non-governmental bodies to promote TSH, and for the networking of practitioners.

6. There is urgent need for a manual of Traditional Systems of Healing, homeopathy and Emerging New Systems, with brief introductions to some 20 of the most important systems (about 20-25 pages for each discipline) among these, choosing those with proven efficacy, easy availability and low cost. The essays must be competently written by experts in each field, with a view to being used as a text book in all institutions of medical training, allopathic, traditional or new. Perhaps a two volume edition, affordable, should be made available also to the general public.

To Corporations, Insurance Companies and others

1. We recognised the fact that economic power to effect some of these measures was not primarily in the hands of governmental bodies. We saw the positive role that private sector corporations could play in promoting universal health care, making maximum use of Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy, and the Newly Emerging Systems of Healing. Their economic power and organizational resources should be optimally used to promote TSH. This is particularly so, in the context of increasing privatisation of medicine and healing and the entry of corporations into large scale manufacturing and marketing of pharmaceuticals for TSH.

2. We felt the need for the corporations, in consultation with public interest bodies and persons, formulating a code of conduct to be observed by all private sector enterprises in the field of health and healing. Such a code should give priority to the interests of the public and only secondarily to the conventional private sector interest of profit and power. The corporations should pledge themselves not to engage in the manufacture or marketing of any product or service harmful to the health and well being of the people, or beyond the means of ordinary people.

3. The corporations should jointly or individually set up endowments, funds and foundations for promoting Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy and Emerging New Therapies and for maximising their use in the health care of the common people. This would be in the interest of Health Insurance companies in all lands as the use of TSH will substantially reduce morbidity and mortality. They should set aside and wisely use funds for setting up multisystem centres of healing research and documentation.

4. The corporations should take special care to see that the natural herbal resources of countries are not depleted or destroyed by over-exploitation. They should make it a point to ensure that for every herbal plant plucked up two are immediately planted, as is done in afforestation programmes.

To the Media - Print, Electronic and Other

1. Health for all is just as important as Food and Clothing for All, or as part of the movement for a Sustainable Life Environment, and for Peace, Justice, Freedom and Dignity for All. A workable programme for ensuring Health for All must necessarily include the renewal and full utilisation of Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy and the Newly Emerging Therapies. We appeal to all media to intensify their efforts to promote public awareness of these systems and to disseminate accurate information about them. We make a special appeal to local languages media to highlight these systems and their capacity to prevent illness and promote health.

2. We appeal especially to teachers, doctors, literary writers, actors, poets, painters, musicians, dancers and other artists to help in the

dissemination of knowledge about the basic principle of health, and to fulfil the potential role of all media in creating greater awareness about the possibilities and advantages of TSH.

3. We welcome projects to start global media channels and networks which specialize, on a non-profit, non-commercial basis, in promoting information on Transcultural Health Care, projecting particularly some of the essential sub-cultural aspects of TSH, and drawing special attention also to the spiritual aspects of health and healing.

4. The Media should promote debate and discussion to bring about better mutual understanding between western medicine and TSH, and to dispel prevailing ignorance and wrong notions.

5. As multi-system healing centres develop all over the world, the media should promote awareness about these centres as a significant move in advance towards Health for All.

Love's Freedom: The Grand Mystery

A Spiritual Autobiography

**All-uniting Love
with Creative Freedom in the Spirit,
as the Grand Mystery at the Heart of Reality
- One Man's Vision**

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

First Edition: Nov. 1997

Revised Edition: 2018

PREFACE

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios began writing his “Spiritual Autobiography” on April 18, 1993 while staying at Oxford. He travelled from Oxford to Cologne on May 29 in order to attend the Symposium on the Foundations of Theoretical Physics at the Institute of High Energy Physics at the University of Cologne. He was carrying the unfinished story of his life in his laptop computer. When the flight arrived at the Cologne airport they had to take him out on a wheel chair. He had a stroke in midair and his left side was paralysed. His story remained unfinished. Yet he continued the dauntless struggle with his life overshadowed by a debilitating leukemia until he finished his earthly combat on November 24, 1996.

We are now publishing posthumously the unfinished autobiography of Metropolitan Gregorios together with some of his other writings that fit into his autobiographical reflections revealing new dimensions of his spiritual, theological and philosophical vision. We are reproducing here the total plan of the book as he conceived it. That means that some chapters have only the titles. The text in several places contain self-instructions for elaboration, insertions or further references. We felt it was important to publish them as they appeared in the original text since the titles and notes clearly indicate the areas of his life which he considered significant for retracing his spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage.

Mar Gregorios wrote the autobiography directly on his computer. The electronic gadget in its ever-improving versions had been his indispensable companion since the mid-80s. He really enjoyed working with it and made the computer a real play-mate. Even after he was partially paralysed he did not seek the help of a secretary, but worked with amazing agility using one hand, organizing meetings and doing

correspondence with the aid of his Notebook computer and a phone-fax machine on his desk. The furious pace of his work was only slowed down by the later stages of his illness. He, however, did not resume the writing of his autobiography apart from a short "journal" typed in from his sickbed in the hospital in Germany. He had wanted to refer to various documents in order to write substantially about his years with the World Council of Churches and his extensive involvement in other world organizations and movements. He put aside the writing of his story with the hope of doing it later at Kottayam. But he was never able to complete it.

It is perhaps symbolic that his autobiography remained unfinished. Mar Gregorios had a restless mind. His adventurous intellect constantly went out in search of the new in all fields of human knowledge. With his remarkable ability to synthesize the insights from various disciplines into a meaningful whole he sought to interpret afresh the reality of God, world and humanity. He had a deep sense of incompleteness in him that yearned for completion. Hence his "quest", as he once wrote to the renowned philosopher Martin Heidegger, "for uncovering (or unveiling myself to) the ground of all existence." His intellectual daring arose from his relentless search for a fuller and clearer picture of reality.

The life of Mar Gregorios was shaped by an intense sense of intense suffering and struggle. The experiences of his adolescence and early youth, as narrated by him in these pages, were decisive for his spiritual and intellectual development. The chapter on 'Suffering - Key to the Mystery' poignantly unveils the perceptions of a prodigiously intelligent and spiritually sensitive boy destined to struggle alone in an unkind world. This chapter and the following one on his Ethiopian experience provide clues to his sometimes miserably misunderstood mature personality.

We want to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to several friends and well-wishers who helped us in publishing this book. Mr Cherian Eapen (Los Angeles \ Moscow) a longtime friend of Mar Gregorios contributed substantially to this publication technically and financially. Mr Binoy Jacob (Kanam, Kerala), computer consultant to

Metropolitan Gregorios, helped to sort out the electronic muddle from diskettes kept in Delhi. Mr K.V.Thomas (Dubai) generously offered assistance for the work of Mar Gregorios Foundation. We remember with gratitude H.G. Job Mar Philoxenos, Acting Metropolitan of Delhi, the Delhi Diocesan Council, the members of the Faculty of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam and the members of the Executive Committee of the Paulos Mar Gregorios Foundation for their commitment to the publication of this book and the proposed series.

Fr. K. M.George

Kottayam

November 24, 1997

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CHAPTER 1

CREDENTIALS

APOLOGY FOR A

PERSONAL CONFESSION

This is my story. I wish I could tell it as it really happened to me, in me, and around me. That would take a better memory than I have. It calls for much more: for example, a nobler soul unafraid of exposing itself; a more secure personality structure, which can look at itself with more honesty; freedom from the need to brag and boast; better capacity to give credit where it is due and to acknowledge one's myriad debts to others; in speaking of achievements and failures, less selectivity in favor of the former; perhaps more willingness to perceive one's own ordinariness.

Even if my memory were prodigiously accurate, I know I would simply not be capable of separating interpretation from fact when it comes to telling my own story. Besides, I simply lack the guts to reveal the whole story even as I remember it. There is so much in my story of which I am, or at least ought to be, profoundly ashamed. Some things in my life I so loathe the memory of, that I would lack even the strength to dig them out of the sub-conscious and unconscious chambers of the memory and face them myself. Revealing other things about myself may do damage to others.

It seems inevitable therefore that whatsoever I write, the sub-conscious desire to create an impression would distort my testimony. I like applause, and like most others, experience pain at rebuke. I have not attained to that level of spiritual development where praise and blame would equally bounce off my skin like water off a duck's back. An adverse judgment by others still depresses me. A good review in turn pleases me no end.

In principle I know that this is not as it should be. My self-esteem should not, in theory, be dependent on other people's judgment of me. I should value myself and love myself for the simple reason that, despite all my failures, faults and foibles, God loves me. I know that

in theory. But to practice that equanimity fully I must grow deeper roots in to that love of God. The greater my sense of security in being enfolded in God's caring and dependable love, the higher would be my capacity to be unaffected by accolade or allegation, reproof or approbation. That sense of security measures up in me at present as fair, but by no means as full or near perfect.

What then is the purpose of this strange "spiritual autobiography" of mine? Why should anyone read it? Why should I write it?

First, one should mention a somewhat selfish reason. I want to see for myself what I have learned from life, even if I am as yet unable to practice most of what I approve. It is almost seventyone years since I came to this life as a new-born baby. There should be some things I have learned through these years of a rather full life, insights which may even benefit others if I share them. Those who know me through my public image may be disappointed in some cases with what they read here. That is perhaps as it should be. False images do not deserve to be perpetuated. But I want to see for myself what I can say about what I have learned from life. Saying it would in itself be an act of learning for me. On the other hand, what I have lived through constitute part of my credentials for saying what I am saying here. Elsewhere I try to give an account in bare outline of my not too pedestrian life.

Second, I want to give thanks to God for what He has done for me and for others. I want to laud and praise Him in the congregation of humanity. Very few human beings may actually hear my hymn of praise and thanksgiving. I want to acknowledge freely that whatever there has been of good in me and in my words and acts, has come entirely from Him, for He is the source of all good, and I recognize Him as such.

I suspect that some of my readers may not like such theistic language. To some any God-language, besides being philosophically questionable, sounds too pious or / and pretentious, and therefore unauthentic.

I would generally agree with them on both counts. I do not know of any logically consistent or conceptually faultless philosophical theism

in the history of human religion and philosophy. I am one who suffers unbearably from the philosophical naivete of most of my Christian theological colleagues. I know especially that within the world of modern critical rationality, God-language is philosophically problematic.

I am also aware of the fact that never before in human history did God-talk sound so inauthentic and ring so false. We have had, in our funny modern secular civilisation where God is fundamentally and methodologically eliminated from all that we regard as important - from our science-technology, from our literature, from our art and music, from our civic polity, from our social sciences, from our educational system and from our healing arts/sciences - precisely in that secular culture, we have had, an incredible surfeit of God-talk, as if we were frantically trying to convince ourselves that we had not so eliminated God from our life.

I could probably say much the same things without mentioning God. But an inner compulsion pushes me to violate the taboo against mentioning God in academic or respectable discourse. I do not want to take God's name in vain, nor do I wish to misuse it for gaining political mileage. But I do not want to be intimidated either, by that arrogant secular culture which seeks to impose on me the dogma that the human being is either self-existent or the result of an accident in natural evolution, and therefore owes nothing whatsoever to God. That dogma certainly has no evidence to support it. The evidence I have seen convinces me that LaPlace was talking like a very presumptuous adolescent when he claimed that science had no need of a God-hypothesis. I do not want to impose my God-concept on others, but then neither can I desist from praising the Source, Ground and Guide of all existence, just because science has been able to provide no incontrovertible evidence for God's Is-ness.

My third reason is also quite compelling, at least for myself. I have three or four books in my head, I think. But I do not think I have enough time left in my advanced life to complete those in any satisfactory way. I want to use this work also as an occasion for me to review some of the ideas and ideologies that I have come across in my long life in four continents and amidst many cultures. Several people have actually asked me to write the story of my life. So, with

the readers' leave, I will use my life-story as a framework for touching upon the many ideas that crowd my limited mind in the late evening of my life.

If I am not boring my reader, permit me to give the shell of my life in a few paragraphs. The over-all framework of my life will perhaps help the reader to put individual episodes in perspective. My life has been quite global, inter-continental as well as cross-cultural.

II. A BRIEF SKETCH OF MY LIFE

I have lived in Africa (mostly in Ethiopia, two stints in 1947-50 and 1956-59, but have also visited a dozen other countries in that continent) for some six years or more. I spent some seven years in the American continent (two fairly long stints in 1950-54 and 1959-60 and scores of extended visits to the USA; also visited Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Cuba, Jamaica and other Latin American and Caribbean countries). I have also lived in Europe (mostly in Switzerland in 1962-67, England in 1960-61 and Germany in 1972, but also visiting several times nearly all the other countries of Eastern and Western Europe) for another seven or eight years. I visited the Soviet Union at least 45 times between 1962 and 1992.

The rest of my life I have spent in Asia, the first twentyfive exclusively in India. I have visited China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, the Soviet Far East, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, Sri Lanka and so on, some of them several times; also visited most countries in West Asia. I have not missed Australia and New Zealand either. All that gives me some knowledge of humanity and its many-hued culture.

LANGUAGES

I have read a lot and listened to a lot more. Languages help both to read and to listen to a wider variety of people. I cannot say that I have mastered any language. I seem to have a fair degree of control in using English (not my mother-tongue, but the language in which I happen to be most fluent). I must disclaim any capacity for genuine literary writing, though I admire and often envy such capacity in others. This despite the fact that I have written and published some 15 books in English.

I can still use Malayalam, my mother-tongue (a South Indian language of the so-called Dravidian family, a derivative of Tamil, spoken in Kerala) with some facility, though it has now become rusty with disuse. I can still do literary or journalistic writing as well as give public addresses in that language, as I often have to.

I was once (fortythree years ago) rather proficient in Amharic, the official Ethiopian language then, since I had to teach it (after learning it for about 18 months) at the 12th Grade level to Amharic-speaking Ethiopian students. I have not had occasion to use it very much these past thirty-four years or so since I left the Ethiopian Civil Service in 1959. It is also quite rusty. Once I wrote a grammar of Amharic for my own teaching purposes.

That adds up to one Euro-American language, one Asian language, and one African language. Some help in understanding diverse cultures.

Of course I have dabbled in a dozen or more other languages, but I cannot say that I know those languages. French I can read and understand, but can hardly write in it, and can speak with difficulty only. The same is true of German also, though my vocabulary is more limited than in French. I have a smattering of two other Indian languages - Hindi and Tamil. I have some reading knowledge of Biblical or *Koine* Greek, and have struggled also with Classical Greek, Patristic Greek, and even modern (*Demotiki*) Greek. I have some rudimentary knowledge of Sanskrit, the classical Indian language, as also of Latin, Europe's classical language. Spanish, Italian and Portuguese I can read with difficulty. Other languages like Russian and Arabic and *Ge'ez* (the classical language of Ethiopia) I have wrestled with, but the results have been conspicuously poor, in fact nonevident.

I have acquired a limited reading knowledge of a few other Semitic languages, like Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac. These have also given some insights into aspects of Semitic culture. Perhaps I may mention one other language I learned in six weeks at Oklahoma University in the summer of 1950, and forgot in just as many weeks - Kayawa, the unwritten language of a small Native American tribe in Oklahoma. I still remember the kind lady from that tribe who was

“informant” for my self-study of the language - Mrs. Helen Spottedhorse.

Well, that is all. I do not know how many languages all that totes up to. I wish I had the ability of my friend and benefactor, Dr. Eugene Nida of the American Bible Society who once told me he had analyzed the structure of a 120 or more languages!

I must confess that even my limited knowledge of languages (less than 1% of the more than 2000 tongues of the world) has been a considerable help in breaking through to other cultures and to mentalities of peoples. I have noted that in my sojourns abroad, the intensity of my immersion in other cultures has been proportional to the distance I have managed to maintain from the Indian community in that area. This has sometimes meant being looked upon as a snob by one's own fellow countrymen in such areas, for one gets to spend so little time with them in their many frivolous and amusing pursuits and in their fairly uninhibited and free exchange of gossip and slander.

MANY JOBS

Yes, I seem to have seen and heard much. Another advantage I had was perhaps the many different jobs I have held, only partly by personal choice. Let me recall here some of the main ones.

I finished my secondary education, all of it at the Government Boy's High School in my hometown, Tripunithura, near Cochin in Central Kerala, in March 1937, when I was not yet 15 years old. I think I was born on the 9th of August 1922. I am not quite sure. The records say the 25th of Karkatakam in 1097 Malayalam Era, if I remember right. I must check that up some time. The secondary school final examination was in March 1937, I remember. I came out with some distinction in the state-wide (it was the State of Cochin, ruled by a maharaja in those days) secondary school examination - first class, 6th rank in the state, first in the school, if my memory does not deceive me. That was not so bad, considering the circumstances in which I had to write that examination. On that later.

I even managed to secure a state merit scholarship (Rs. 4.50 a month for four years), sufficient for paying my College tuition fees at

the Madras University. But then the nearest affiliated College was 6 miles away, the Maharajah's College, Ernakulam. I would need another Rs. 5.00 (little more than one U S dollar in those days) per month for bus fare and lunch. My father, who as a primary school teacher, earned Rs. 28.00 per month, on which he had to bring up a family of a wife and five sons, simply told me that he could not afford that amount.

So I had to start working before I was quite fifteen, not so much to earn a living as just to keep out of trouble by keeping myself occupied. None of my uncles or other relatives would help me with that five rupees a month, which I needed to go for a college education. I worked for thirteen long years before I earned enough to go to college at the age of 28, and that too in the USA.

I worked as a teen-ager journalist, covering important events for our Roman Catholic daily *Malabar Mail*, and as a freelance writer in English for the weekly and monthly press in India, already at the age of 16. I also got elected as Secretary of the local Public Library and Reading Room in my hometown, Tripunithura. Then I got a job as a clerk in a transportation and shipping firm in Cochin. After a couple of years at that I entered a competitive examination and joined the clerical cadre of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs department. I served in several little towns in the Princely states of Cochin and Travancore as telegraphist and as Postmaster. Finally I was elected as Associate Secretary for Travancore-Cochin of the All India Posts and Telegraphs Union, and even helped organize a major nation-wide strike against the British Raj, in those pre-independence days of India.

From 1947 to 1950 I served as a teacher in the Government schools in Ethiopia, teaching all the way from primary to secondary and also at College level. The story of how I got to Ethiopia in the first place will have to be told later. Less than three years in Ethiopia taught me a great deal and the years were eventfilled, turbulent and productive. I had more than a fair share of opposition and adulation. That too is a long story, and will have to wait.

In 1950 I left Ethiopia, for I needed to get some more formal education before getting too old. I was already 28 and had not been

to College. On my way to joining Goshen College in the USA, I visited the Middle East and Europe as a tourist. So many new doors were thus opened to new cultures. For four years in America (1950-54) I worked hard as a student and secured both my BA degree from Goshen College, and also earned a Bachelor of Divinity (later changed to Master of Divinity) degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. America was a distinct cultural experience, very enriching. One of my richest experiences as an Eastern Orthodox layman was serving as Assistant Pastor in two Black Baptist churches in Elkhart, Indiana and Princeton, New Jersey during that first four-year sojourn.

I came back to India in 1954, and started working as a teacher of the Christian religion for university students and for educated lay people, at the Fellowship House connected with Union Christian College, Alwaye, in Central Kerala. I was also Honorary Associate Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of India, working mostly with Orthodox and Protestant University students and teachers all over India. At the same time I was elected General Secretary of the Orthodox Student Conference, and in that Capacity organized the Orthodox Christian Student Movement of India. These were invaluable experiences in shaping my thought and spirituality.

In 1956 I had to go to Ethiopia again, this time as Personal Assistant, Liaison Officer with India, and Special Advisor to Emperor Haile Sellassie of Ethiopia. In that position I received many insider's insights into how a government structure works, though the Ethiopian system was not the most developed. The details of that story will have to wait, since this is only a skeleton sketch of my life.

In 1959 I resigned my Ethiopian job with great difficulty (story later) and went to Yale University in America for further theological and philosophical study. I found the facilities for theological study at Yale Divinity School not quite up to the mark, because of colossal and I fear, somewhat cultivated, ignorance of vast areas of Christian history and thought and spirituality. On the other hand I found the Yale Graduate School excellent in modern western philosophy, especially in understanding German philosophers like Kant and Husserl. During this year I served also as a consultant to the

Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, which gave me some great insights into the inside workings of a large American Protestant denomination.

I decided to leave Yale and go to Oxford, anticipating better knowledge of Eastern Theology and Patristics there. I got admitted to a D. Phil (Doctor of Philosophy) program at Oxford, with membership in Keble College, but living at the House of St. Gregory and St. Macrina at 1 Canterbury Road in Oxford. In general Oxford disappointed me - too staid, too dogmatic, too insular, too pompously unauthentic for my taste. But I had great teachers there like Michael Polanyi, who initiated me into some of the problems of human knowing and intellectual certainty. My philosophical pilgrimage, which began with an introductory course at Goshen, and had substantially developed at Princeton and Yale, reached a new level of maturity at Oxford. My mind developed by reacting critically to teachers like Gilbert Ryle and Ian Ramsey, Henry Chadwick and R. C. Zahner.

While at Oxford I was invited to Geneva by Dr. Visser't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. He asked me to join the WCC staff at Geneva. I had to say to him that I found the WCC too uncongenial, as being too western and too Protestant. He said that that was the very reason they wanted me - to reverse the trend and balance the one-sidedness. I turned the offer down, politely disclaiming my ability to do what was required, and insisting on my need to complete the studies at Oxford.

The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches was being held at New Delhi in 1961. I was invited to be one of the three main Bible Study leaders, along with Dr. Martin Niemoeller of Germany and Prof. Paul Minear of Yale. My own Orthodox Church in India, which was a founder - member of the WCC also asked me to be one of its delegates at the Assembly. I accepted both invitations, and the Assembly turned out to be a great occasion for my entry into the Ecumenical Movement, from which I had generally kept a respectful distance as a fairly friendly critic of the WCC.

The nearly one thousand participants of the Assembly were divided into three sections, and it was my privilege to lead five daily Bible

studies for one of the sections. Obviously the first Bible study was such a great success, that the next day several prominent people began leaving their sections and coming to my Bible studies. One such was Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, who eventually became a life-long friend and admirer.

Several Orthodox Churches were founder - members of the WCC as it was formed in 1948 in Amsterdam, at the first Assembly. That included the Orthodox churches of India and Egypt, Ethiopia and Greece. But the vast majority of the Orthodox churches, being under Communist rule, had not been permitted by their government or by the WCC authorities to join as members. In 1961, at the New Delhi Assembly, almost all of them came in: the large Russian Orthodox Church, the sizeable Romanian, the Georgian, the Armenian, the Bulgarian, the Serbian and others made a grand influx, and the WCC was now one-third Orthodox and two-third Protestant. But the staff in Geneva was almost exclusively Protestant, except for the layman Professor Nikos Nissiotis from the Church of Greece. The Orthodox were short of competent persons with proficiency in western languages to serve on the staff.

So, when the young Indian Priest Fr. Paul Verghese, as I was then known, from Oxford, made a great impression on the Assembly, the Orthodox delegates were exceptionally elated and proud. I was 39 and had just been ordained a priest a few months before the Assembly. The Orthodox delegates present in New Delhi decided to make the trip south to Kerala (a good 3000 kilometers) to request the head of my church to persuade me to go to Geneva and become the spokesman on the staff for all the Orthodox churches.

So in 1962 began a new chapter in my life, providing me with a vast global arena of service and experience, for which I am perpetually grateful. From 1962 to 1967 I served as Associate General Secretary and Director of the Division of Ecumenical Action. I was able to visit most of the Protestant and Orthodox churches of the World, to serve as an Observer at the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church and to get an inside knowledge of the Christian churches of the world. Living in the scenic city of Geneva in an apartment of my

own was also a new experience, cooking my own meals and doing my own chores like laundry and shopping. I will speak about my WCC experience later.

In 1967, declining a firm written invitation and considerable pressure to renew my contract for another five years, I left Geneva to serve my own Church in India, as Principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kottayam, Kerala, where all the priests of my Church are trained. I have continued in that position right up to now. Two things I cherished in that experience: the opportunity to teach more or less full time, and the possibility of shaping of the life and thought of young candidates for the priesthood. I have also been able, by the Grace of God, to build up the Seminary, with the help of my students and colleagues, to its present level of a high quality academic institution.

I had discontinued my doctoral research program at Oxford, in order to go to Geneva. Now it was time to take it up again, on my own at Kottayam. The demands on my time both from the Seminary and from my own Church as a whole, left me little time for independent study. Besides I kept up a hectic world-wide schedule in international conferences and seminars, in a continuing ministry of coordinating the work of the Oriental Orthodox churches of Egypt, Syria, Armenia, India and Ethiopia, and in a plethora of services to the Churches in Communist countries. I was very much in demand as a speaker also in the Western churches, as well as in Africa and Asia.

In fact my international work became even more extensive than when I was on the staff of the WCC in Geneva. Already in 1968 my Church had nominated me to serve as its man on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. I had also been appointed as Secretary of my Church for Inter-Church Relations, a rather demanding assignment. I served also as a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC from 1968 to 1975, meeting and working with many outstanding theological minds. Another highly educative experience was serving for 12 years as a founding member of the Joint Working Group between the Vatican and the WCC (1963 to 1975). I was also privileged to serve, along with the late Prof. Nissiotis of the Greek Orthodox Church, as Joint Convenor of the

history-making informal conversations between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox churches which had broken communion with each other more than 13 centuries ago. Given these responsibilities, sustained scholarly research was practically impossible.

In 1972 I took 6 months' leave from the Seminary and went to Muenster, in Westphalia, West Germany for writing my doctoral dissertation on "God - World - Man Relationship in St. Gregory of Nyssa." Muenster had a special University Institute for the study of the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa. I stayed in the Roman Catholic Priesterseminar, a house for post-seminary studies for Roman Catholic priests. The institute kindly gave me the best they could offer in terms of facilities. I finished my writing in time, and also got to know the German culture slightly better. My dissertation was later submitted to Serampore University, and after some abbreviation was accepted. I received the Doctor of Theology degree in 1975.

In 1975 I was consecrated as Bishop, and was given the responsibility for the newly created Delhi diocese, as a part-time job in addition to all my other duties in the Church. There was neither office nor residence for the Bishop in 1975. My diocese included besides the whole of Northwest India, also the Gulf States and Europe. Delhi was 3000 miles from Kottayam, and I had to commute. By the Grace of God it was possible not only to build an architecturally attractive diocesan centre, but also to build up some 20 new churches in the diocese. Needless to say, all that took effort and time.

In 1975 I was elected to the Executive Committee of the WCC. This meant going abroad at least three times a year for WCC meetings alone. In 1983 at Vancouver, Canada, I was elected a President of the World Council of Churches, a position I held till 1991. I had also rather early been elected as a Vice - President of the Christian Peace Conference with its headquarters in Prague, Czechoslovakia, which also meant frequent international meetings and travel.

At home meanwhile, besides being a speaker much in demand, I served as a member of the Senate of Kerala University (1972-76) and of the Senate of Serampore University (1970-74, and again

1984-93). I was elected Vice - President of the Kerala Philosophical Congress in 1968. In 1975, we were able to host the annual session of the Indian Philosophical Congress and to chair the Reception Committee. My association since 1974 with Indian philosophers in the Indian Philosophical Congress and in the Indian Council of Philosophical Research has been a major factor in the growth of my understanding and awareness of the great and rich Indian philosophical heritage. Later on, I was elected as General President of the Indian Philosophical Congress, founded by Rabindranath Tagore and S. Radhakrishnan some 80 years ago. It seems I was the first and only Indian Christian to adorn that post. The honor was hardly deserved, but some of my friends in the Indian Philosophical establishment thought that the General Presidency should not be given only to members of the majority community.

LECTURERSHIPS AND PUBLICATIONS

On the American continent too I had several pleasant and profitable associations. In 1968 the Lutherans invited me to deliver the Hein Memorial Lectures in three of their seminaries. That was when I began substantially extended writing, going beyond articles and papers. These lectures were subsequently incorporated in my *The Freedom of Man* published by the Westminster Press, Philadelphia in 1972, and later in my *Freedom and Authority*, published by the Christian Literature Society, Madras in 1974.

My first major published book dealt with some of the specifics of Eastern Christian worship. Association Press in New York and Lutterworth Press in London jointly published *Joy of Freedom, Eastern Worship and Modern Man*, in 1967. The book sold out fairly quickly, and a cheap Indian edition was published by the Christian Literature Society in Madras in 1986. That Society had already published some collections of my Bible Studies and meditations: *The Gospel of The Kingdom* in 1968, and *Be Still and Know* in 1974.

Dr. K. M. Tharakan, a well known literary critic and writer in Kerala, translated my *Joy of Freedom* into Malayalam as *Swathantrya deepthi*. He also wrote a laudatory biography in Malayalam entitled *Paulos Mar Gregorios: Man and thinker*. My

friends and well wishers have brought out two Festschrift volumes in my honor: one in 1982 for my sixtieth Birthday (*Freedom, Love, Community*) and another for my seventieth birthday in 1992 (*Towards a New Humanity*).

I wrote brief accounts of the life and teachings of some of the prominent Eastern Christian Fathers, mainly for the use of the Orthodox college students. That was published in Kottayam in 1969 as *The Faith of Our Fathers*. In 1975, in preparation for the Always session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, I published a brief introduction to modern European philosophy: *The Quest for Certainty*. Two philosophical lectures I gave at Sri Venkateswara University in Tirupati were published by that University in 1978 as *Truth Without Tradition?*

In 1978, as I was chairing the Preparatory Committee for the WCC's famous World Conference on *Faith, Science and the Future*, I was infuriated by a book by one of my Committee members giving the Christian theological basis for an approach to the Environment problem. It was much too Calvinistic and hardly Christian from my perspective. The best I could do to respond was to sit in the Gregorian Library in Rome for three weeks and produce *The Human Presence*, giving an Eastern Orthodox Christian approach to the same problem. The book was published in Geneva by the WCC in 1978, and as it quickly sold out, it was reprinted in 1979. CLS, Madras brought out a cheap edition of this book in 1980, and an American Edition was published by Amity House, New York in 1987. It has been one of my more successful books in terms of sales and reviews. The chapter on "*Mastery and Mystery*" has been widely quoted.

That World Conference on *Faith, Science and the Future*, held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1979, with some 500 physical scientists and the same number of social scientists and theologians attending, constituted, along with the five-year preparatory process under my chairmanship which preceded it, a major turning point in my own thought-life. I had occasion to work with many world thinkers on the issues relating to modern science as our chief way of knowing, and to modern technology as our principal tool for

transforming society and environment. Regarding the conference itself which lasted for several days and which I had the unique privilege to chair I shall have something to say later.

In preparation for it I edited and wrote in part a book called *Science and Our Future* (CLS Madras, 1978), with contributions from Indian scientists and thinkers. I myself wrote the part formulating the main issues confronting us. After the conference I put down in writing my own thoughts on it, which was published as *Science for Sane Societies* by CLS Madras in 1980, and republished by Paragon House, New York in 1987 and 1994.

I had been asked to put together two books on the Oriental Orthodox Churches for German readers. They were in part written by me and in part by others from the respective churches. We wrote in English, and after my editing, the material was translated into German. *Koptisches Christentum*, dealing with the Egyptian and the Ethiopian churches, appeared in 1973 (Stuttgart) as part of the *Kirchen Der Welt* Series. The second book which dealt with the various groups among the Thomas Christians of Kerala, and to which Roman Catholic, Marthoma, and other scholars had contributed, appeared in the same series next year under the title: *Die Syrischen Kirchen in Indien* (Stuttgart, 1974).

We had started a small Kerala Study Group in which many Kerala intellectuals of leftist and rightist convictions were members, including Padmashri K. M. Cherian, Chief Editor of Malayala Manorama (India's largest selling newspaper now), and Sri. C. Achutha Menon (former Chief Minister of Kerala). We used to meet to discuss national and international issues. I had to put together another little book for our study, dealing mostly with the role of Trans National Corporations in India and worldwide. I myself wrote the main part, but added some pieces from others, and we published it under my editorship as *Burning Issues* (Kottayam 1997). The little book was a great success. Even Marxists used it for their study programs on TNCs.

One of the most astounding aspects, for me at least, of my WCC experience was organizing the four unofficial conversations (Aarhus, 1964, Bristol, 1967, Geneva 1970, and Addis Ababa 1971) between

theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox churches, jointly convened by Prof. Nissiotis and myself. Astounding because, after almost 1500 years of separation from and polemic against each other, we found ourselves holding the same faith, and jointly acknowledging that the Christological issue (whether the incarnate Christ's divine and human natures had actually become one, or should still be counted as two) which was supposed to have divided us in the fifth and sixth centuries was basically terminological and not substantial. The reports of these conversations, edited by Nissiotis and myself and others, appeared in the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* published by the Hellenic College in Brookline, Massachusetts. The WCC asked us to edit a summary of these reports, and this was published in 1981 by the WCC Geneva under the title: *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?*

My doctoral dissertation submitted to Serampore University was published in 1980 by Sophia Publications, New Delhi, under the title *Cosmic Man*. It dealt with the relation between God, Humanity and World in the 4th century Eastern Christian Father St. Gregory of Nyssa. It was later republished under the same title in 1988 by Paragon, New York. It is a work that I had expected to be well received, but that has not been the case. I hope it will be studied more seriously by people in the future, for it deals with one of the fundamental problems of Christian Theism. People who believe in God often simply take it for granted that God, Humanity and World are three entities, while Gregory of Nyssa had already seen the philosophical problem of seeing the Creator and the Creation as two entities distinct from each other. The Hindu Advaita Vedantin's point was recognized as basically sound and legitimate, though formulated and explained differently, by this ancient Asian writer from Cappadocia in Asia Minor (present day Turkey). Gregory of Nyssa lived and wrote three or four centuries before Sankara in India.

St. Thomas, one of the Twelve Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, is believed to have come to India in 52 A D and established the Christian Church. According to tradition he was martyred in a place (now called San Thome) near Madras, speared to death by Hindus. The date of his martyrdom was reckoned as 82 A D. In 1982, the

Indian Orthodox Church, which with other Thomas Christians in India, that claims St. Thomas as its founder, celebrated the nineteenth centenary of that martyrdom in a big way. Many guests had come from far off places, including Gyani Zail Singh, the President of India and Patriarch Ilya of Georgia. I was practically in charge of the celebrations, assisted by a large team of people. We wanted a small book on the history of our Church to be given to the guests. There was none available, and in about a week I had to write one myself. This was published as *The Indian Orthodox Church: An Overview*. The C.M.S. Press, Kottayam printed the book in less than a week, though in binding it, they made some mistakes in putting the pages together.

By the 1980's I was getting quite restless about the wildly erratic theological formulations propagated by the World Council of Churches. I was elected a President in 1983, and I insisted that I should give a series of lectures to the staff in Geneva about these errors. Influential members of the staff, of course, resisted the proposal with all their strength. Finally the General Secretary, Dr. Emilio Castro of Uruguay, accepted the idea of my giving some lectures at the Headquarters in Geneva, where some 80 executives from all countries and some 200 supportive staff worked. The WCC is the largest non-governmental organization in Geneva, much bigger than the Red Cross, for example. I began preparing my lectures, when suddenly I was told that the lectures would have to be on the theme chosen by one of the three Units of the WCC, the theme being *Diakonia* or Service. I recognized this as sabotage by the staff, but I decided to play their game and accepted. The five or six meditations were then put together and published by the WCC as *The Meaning and Nature of Diakonia* (Geneva, 1988). The book got some good reviews, but made no impression on the staff. They still go on propagating the old errors, and nowadays even some worse ones. Most of the senior staff began looking upon me as an enemy and still seem to do so.

My more readable theological works, from my own point of view, are *The Joy of Freedom* and *The Human Presence*. In terms of substance, *Cosmic Man - The Divine Presence* is perhaps the richest. The Mar Gregorios Foundation (formed by my friends in Kerala in

honor of my seventieth birthday in 1992) has recently published a collection of my earlier writings under the title *A Human God*. It deals with some of the issues in our understanding of Christ, and carries on a polemic with some fundamental western positions. That Foundation has in its possession hundreds of my articles and papers, some of them hitherto unpublished. They have also published a collection of my Malayalam papers, entitled *Darsanathinte Pookal*. Translated, that title would read *Blossoms of Philosophy*. They have intentions, they say, of publishing several volumes of my collected papers in the future. But I have become tired of theological writing, especially polemical writing. If God grants me life and health, I still hope to write one other theological book which would summarize my faith-understanding unpolemically.

More recently I have done some significant non-theological writing. The Indian Institute of Advanced Study located in the former Viceregal Lodge (later Rashtrapati Nivas) in Shimla in the Himalayas gave me a study fellowship which enabled me to write my *Enlightenment: East and West*, published by that Institute and favorably reviewed in India. The State University of New York Press wanted to publish it jointly with the Institute, but the latter was not willing for some reason. It would be paranoid on my part to suspect jealousy on the part of the Institute authorities.

In any case, the Shimla book had been written with an Indian readership in mind, pointing out that the great Founding Father of our nation, Jawaharlal Nehru, was primarily a child of the European Enlightenment, and not a promoter of the Indian heritage. For SUNY Press I decided to write another book on the same theme, this time with the western readership in mind. That came out in 1992 under the title *A Light Too Bright: The Enlightenment Today*. Reviews so far have been favorable, though not raving.

Besides all these, I have written, as already stated, hundreds of periodical articles and contributions to symposia and encyclopaediae. I gave the Dudley Lecture at Harvard University in 1979, questioning the then prevailing thesis that secularization was an irreversible process. I saw then that religion had to come back into public life in

some new form, and would do so fairly soon. That was an unfashionable view for the establishment, and Harvard Theological Review, which had agreed in advance to publish my lecture, regretted their inability to abide by the agreement.

I have often taken such unpopular anti-establishment positions, but my worst offence was suggesting, in some theological writings and lectures, that the prevailing Christian idea of the centrality of mission was a creation of western imperialism rather than the teaching of the Christian Church through the centuries. Even the people of my own church, who have been deeply brainwashed by western propaganda, regard such views as simply part of my personal idiosyncrasy. I have also suggested that the way some western Christians speak about the Lordship of Christ over the Church and the World, as well as their obtuseness to other religions and cultures, came more from an unjustified confidence in the superiority of western culture than from the Christian faith itself.

In fairness to my American Christian friends, I must say that despite such unpopular views they have asked me to talk and teach. I served as Mary Louise Iliff Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at the Iliff School of Theology at Denver, Colorado for the summer session of 1978. I was Distinguished Visiting Professor at the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio for a term in 1981. I was a Visiting Fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1986 and in 1988.

HONOURS, PRIZES AND AWARDS

Prizes and honours, I should know, are no reliable gauge for a person's true worth. Yet since we are dealing with credentials for saying what follows, I may be permitted to give a quick list of some I have received. Here are the main ones in three clusters: Indian, East European, and Western.

India

The Soviet Land Nehru Award, which was bestowed on me in 1988, carried some prestige in India. It was instituted by a distinguished group of Indians and Soviet citizens. It seeks to recognize extraordinary service to the cause of peace and justice. Mother Teresa of Calcutta received it a year after I did.

The Bhai Param Vir Singh International Award, which I received in 1990, was set up by the National Institute of Panjabi Studies and is controlled by the Sikh community in India. I presume it was a recognition of what little I had contributed to the promotion of inter-religious harmony in India as well as abroad.

I was the first, I believe, to receive the Acharya Award (1992), set up in Kerala, to honor great Indian teachers of humanity.

My name has appeared in India Who's Who, Kerala Who's Who, and other Indian biographical reference works.

Eastern Europe

During the thirty years or so when I struggled to serve the Christian people in the so-called Socialist countries of Eastern Europe and to promote dialogue between Communists and non-Communists in the world, I received many honors, which some may now regard as dishonors. But I cherish them.

I was the first outsider to receive an honorary doctorate in Theology from the Leningrad Theological Academy of the Russian Orthodox Church; Others like Cardinal Willebrands of the Vatican received it later. I was also nominated as an honorary lecturer in Theology at that Academy.

The Lutheran Theological Academy in Budapest, Hungary gave me another Doctor of Theology, *honoris causa*. A third honorary doctorate in theology was given to me by the Jan Hus Faculty in Prague, Czechoslovakia. The Orthodox Theological Faculty in Czechoslovakia invited me to receive an honorary doctorate, but I was unable to receive it in person.

Two prestigious further honors were bestowed on me by the Russian Orthodox Church: the Order of St. Vladimir, and later the most prestigious Order of St. Sergius, First Rank. The Polish Orthodox Church decorated me with the Order of St. Mary Magdalen, the First Witness (to the resurrection of Christ). The Old Catholic Church in Poland awarded me the Order of Bishop Fransiszek Hodur, First Class.

In the then East Germany, I was awarded in 1988 the Otto Nuschke Prize for Peace. I believe again that I was the first outsider to merit this honor established in the name of the Founder of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). I remember an amusing story in connection with this award. I had prepared, in German, a manuscript for the lecture associated with the award, to be delivered to the Executive Committee of the CDU. I had raised some fundamental questions about the reforms and revisions then being introduced by Michael Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. I thought the German Communists would be happy to hear my criticism. I had to give the text in advance, to be vetted by the President of the CDU, who was a friend of 25 years standing and also No. 2 in the DDR government. The day before the lecture, he sent an assistant to my hotel to tell me that I would have to skip all references to Gorbachev. I reluctantly agreed to cut four pages out of my text. The next morning, one hour before actually delivering the lecture, I was told that the whole text of the lecture would have to be abandoned, and that I should speak extemporaneously about peace in general. And that is what I had to do! If I can find the English version of my original text among my papers some day, I would like to publish it.

America and the West

The Americans have been quite generous to me. Especially the American Biographical Association, which publishes several global Biographical reference works, has done me many an honor. They have included me in the *National Register of Prominent Americans and International Notables*, and also in *Who's Who in America*. My name finds a place in several editions of the *Dictionary of International Biography*, of the *International Who's Who*, and of the *World Who's Who*. It appears also in *Who's Who in Religion*, in the *International Who's Who of Intellectuals*, *International Authors and Writers Who's Who*, and also in the *Dictionary of International Community Service*.

Perhaps a higher level of honor is meant by the inclusion of my name in *The International Book of Honour*, as also in *International Dictionary of Distinguished Scholarship*.

One is surprised to find one's name in *Men of Achievement*, in *Men and Women of Distinction*, and in *Five Thousand Personalities of the World*, as also in *Five Hundred Leaders of Influence*. Some of these honors also include awards like "The Distinguished Leadership: Award for Extraordinary Service to Peace and Human Unity", and "The International Biographical Roll of Honor for Distinguished Service to World Unity and Understanding among Religions", as well as "The Hall of Fame Award." In 1990 I was presented with the American Biographical Society's prestigious "Man of the Year Award" and in 1991 with the "Golden Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement."

Two of my American almae mater from which I took my first two degrees honored me, Goshen College with their "Culture for Service Award" and Princeton Theological Seminary with their prestigious "Distinguished Alumnus Award." The American Psychiatric Association gave me their "Oskar Pfister Award" in their national meeting in Washington DC in 1992, attended by some 20,000 psychiatrists. I also delivered the Oskar Pfister Lecture on Religion and Psychiatry.

My name appears also in *Who's Who in Switzerland* and in *Who's Who in the Far East*, both published in the west.

Well, you did not ask for my credentials, but I have thrown a whole heap of them at you. Pardon me for this impudence. Let me now desist for a while from beating my own drum, and speak about more serious matters which shaped my person and thought.

CHAPTER II

SUFFERING: KEY TO THE MYSTERY AGONIES OF AN ADOLESCENT

Suffering, whatever it may be, seems to be something people want to get rid of, escape from, or simply avoid. Very few people would be willing to regard suffering as an experience basically good or desirable. In fact our notions of heaven or paradise or *moksha* or *nirvana* seem tailored out of some notions opposite to the idea of suffering - - such as happiness and enjoyment. The absence of either the actuality, or even the possibility, of suffering in any form seems an essential component of that blessed and desired state.

On the other hand, I know people who would use suffering, imagined, put on, or real, as a way of eliciting other people's sympathy and love. I myself often seem to be in danger of doing that. We shall say something later about the uses of suffering.

I have a medical doctor friend, an Internist, who tells me that a good 60% of the people who came to his clinic as patients, had no diagnoseable bodily illness. Especially in our Indian culture, where it does not cost much to go to a public clinic, if you claim to be sick enough to go to a clinic, the rest of the family has to treat you with special consideration, a privilege one does not always have. My physician friend told me that the worst he could do for such people was to tell them that there was nothing wrong with them. They would simply go to another physician who would take them more seriously. He usually prescribed some harmless pills or concoction or both. The placebo worked, as the body did its own healing of the symptoms.

In Buddhism, suffering or *dukkha*, comes to occupy the center-stage as the fundamental and pervasive problem of unredeemed human existence. *Dukkha* does not mean just what the English word 'suffering' communicates to us. It implies also unrest, sorrow, discomfort, distress, dissatisfaction, stress, tension, worry, anxiety, unhappiness, pain, anguish, grief, and misery in all its forms. For Buddhism, *dukkha* is the invariable and universal concomitant of all human existence, in the condition before *bodhi* or *satori*, i.e., before

enlightenment and liberation. The only way to get out of *dukkha* is to get to the root cause of it, to eradicate that root cause, and thereby to escape the bothersome and endless cycle of births and rebirths by attaining *nirvana* or true liberation. The root cause or *hetu* is always *trshna* or desire or craving, lust for experience, greed for a myriad things, desire to get and to possess, yearning to act and to talk, craving for money and pleasure, for power and domination, for fame and acclaim, for gratification, desire ever unsatiated; gratification only enhances the craving in the long run. Once desire is gone, suffering ceases. And the whole of Buddha's teaching is about how to get at desire, through the *dharma*, or the basic grasp of reality in its true nature, through the *sangha*, or the community which practices the *dharma*, and through the *vinaya* or the discipline that trains the *bhikku* to overcome desire.

When I was thirteen years old, I knew nothing about Buddhism, and experienced a lot of suffering. I have often wondered whether, if I had known Buddhism then, it would have shown me the way out of my suffering. But such wondering leads nowhere. I should simply try to give you some account of my suffering as a teenager. For me it was hell, and I could see no way out. Especially since my childhood had been reasonably tranquil, before it all started.

In a human person's life, suffering is the most personal and intimate experience. Descartes definitely took the wrong starting point when he began with his "I think, therefore I am." For most ordinary people, barring the academics, what they could say would be more like: "I think, therefore I am, I think...." They would lack that Cartesian certainty about their thinking activity, which is easier for thinkers far removed from every day life. Whereas, if he had started with "I suffer, therefore I am" he would probably have come to quite different conclusions; at least he would have made more sense to common people. Because my suffering is my own, in a particularly intimate way, and I can never doubt it, even if others do not quite see it. The universal I is much more a sufferer than a thinker. I think Milan Kundera, the Czech philosopher-novelist said that in his *Immortality*.

A Tranquil Childhood

There are very few childhood memories that stand out. Not too many adventures or exploits to narrate. Life was confined to very limited parameters. I cannot even remember the birth of my two younger brothers. Going to school, going to church, visiting some uncles and cousins living not more than six miles away - that was the extent of my experience. Sometimes my father would take me to some Hindu temple festival, late in the evening after supper, mainly to watch *Kathakali*, the traditional Kerala dance-narrative, done in open air at night, usually beginning at 9 pm and ending in the small hours of the morning. Or it may be to watch the fireworks connected with the temple festival. No movies, though silent movies had already come to Tripunithura, my home town.

Not that life was idyllic or something approaching that. Our family was poor though “respectable.” My paternal grandfather, I am told, was somewhat wealthy, with house and land and fields and all that. It seems he squandered and frittered most of that wealth away. He must have taken cash loans from our neighboring family, pledging the land. In my childhood I understood that most of our neighbor’s land once belonged to Thadikkal Kunhipaily, my father’s father. He died before I was born. All I have to go by are a teenager’s memories of what my father and others said about him. It seems he was profligate and slightly on the licentious side. But he was a leader in the community, all the same.

My paternal grandmother too died before I was born, and I have no way of making any judgments. Neither did I know my maternal grandfather, Ponodath Cherian of Mulanthuruthy. I have a vague memory of my maternal grandmother on her death-bed, since mother took me with her as a child when she went to the funeral.

In any case, unlike Sartre, I had no occasion to be spoiled by any grandparents. They all left the scene well before, or soon after, I arrived. I have often wondered whether a bit of spoiling by grandparents is not good for the growing child, a different and often more permissive, tolerant, affectionate relationship than one can have with one’s parents or siblings. Such spoiling seems to help out by

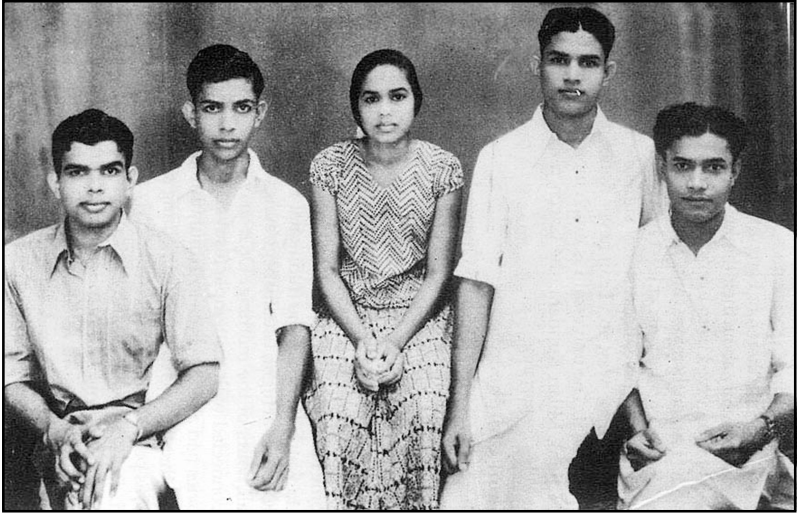
providing a way out from tensions with one's parents, and also supplying a more indulgent, playful senior, often with some wisdom gained from experience. In any case, my brothers and I were not fortunate that way.

In truth I did not even have paternal uncles or aunts. My father was an only child, brought up largely by his mother. That too is not so good when it comes to learning to deal with one's fellow human beings. My mother on the other hand was an only sister of four brothers, a little spoiled angel. She was an angel indeed, extremely intelligent, but with only a fourth grade education. That was not too bad for rural girls in nineteenth century India. She could read and write. One of her brothers was well educated by the standards of those days. He had graduated from high school, and became a revered teacher of all who went to school in the village of Mulanthuruthy. Respected by all as Ponodath Abraham Master, he was also my favorite uncle, learned and noble of character.

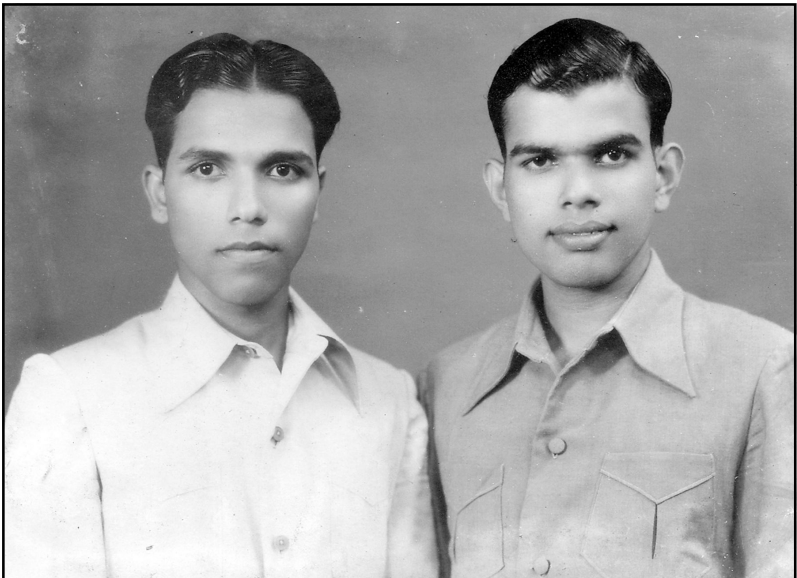
My father had discontinued his education with the eighth grade. He never told us the reason, and we never asked. Perhaps because his father was not alive. He was intelligent and could speak and write better English than many of today's university graduates of India can. He became an elementary school teacher, and was, by the standards of the day, fairly well read in both English and Malayalam literature. I remember that when I was away from home I corresponded with my father in English.

I think my father was thirteen and my mother ten when they were married. That was the custom those days, and there was nothing unusual about such arranged child marriages. What was unusual was the kind of nuclear family in which they had to bring up their five sons. Every other family seemed to have at least one grandparent living. It must have been quite a strain on my parents. Five boys, but no girls. I have heard that the first issue was a girl, but the birth was premature and the infant died soon.

I was the middle child, baptized as Geevarghese or George. Both names are versions of the Greek name Georges, meaning a farmer. In Kerala the version is "Varghese", which in turn is an abbreviation



With brothers and a cousin sister
Left to Right: T. P. Verghese (Mar Gregorios), T. P. Abraham,
Samma, T. P. Jacob, T. P. Paulose



of the Syriac Geevorghese. I was as a child known as T. P. Varghese (Thadikkal Piely Varghese) and later as Paul Verghese until I formally became a monk in 1975. Then I by my own choice took the monastic name Paulos, partly to give some continuity with my former name, and partly to honor in one shot, the Apostle Paul, as well as my late father and eldest brother, both of whom had been baptized as Paulos and had passed away long before 1975.

My two elder brothers, Paulos, named after my father and grandfather, and Cherian (Malayalam equivalent of the Biblical name Zachariah), named according to custom after our maternal grandfather, found this world of *dukkha* a bit too much, and decided to quit early; on that later.

Of the two younger brothers, Jacob lives at home in Tripunithura, quiet, God-fearing, and unadventurous. He and his wife have two sons and two daughters and one grandson. My youngest brother, Abraham, of whom I am particularly fond, six years younger to me, now lives in Vancouver, Canada, with his Malayalee wife, a former Hindu. He is adorably good, with a keen sense of humor, very popular. Their son and daughter also, both Canadian educated, live and work in Canada, in Ottawa and Vancouver respectively. Both children were born in Ethiopia, where Abraham worked as a Commercial School teacher for some years, before they migrated to Canada.

My nephew Paul Abraham, working for Canada's Internal Revenue Service in Ottawa, and his wife Jena, a bright and well educated Indian girl, have a pair of adorable twin boys, Sasha and Roshin of whom also I am very fond.

I am glad to be a grand-uncle to at least three. But I get very little chance to spoil them. Both my brothers and their families are unpretentiously Christian.

Slightly Precocious?

I seem to have been slightly on the precocious side, and went to school early, just past four. I remember my father, then a teacher in the elementary grades in the local Boy's High School, taking me to the Headmaster, for exemption from the age limit of five needed to

be admitted to the first grade. The headmaster was some Iyengar (South Indian Brahmin), formidable and forbidding, in a black coat buttoned up to the neck, white turban on his head, mouthfull of betel-leaf chew. I remember my father also was clad in dhoti, button-up coat and white turban. The image is very vivid in my mind today, because it was quite intimidating to a four-year old. The headmaster thundered, it seemed to me: "What do you intend to do, Piely Master? Bring him to school every day in your coat pocket?" Well, I was admitted. I was glad to be out of the headmaster's office. I was scared.

By the time I was in the fourth grade, my slight precociousness was being noticed in the school. My eldest brother's classmates, six years my senior, would bring their English textbooks to me, to hear me reading them aloud, often without understanding the meaning.

Though I was among the best students in my class, some of my Hindu teachers would take delight in castigating me and making fun of me in class. That was the style those days. My Malayalam teacher, Mr. Sankara Menon was particularly offensive and often downright abusive. Sometimes he would say in class: "How can you shrimp-eating Christians ever learn a literary language like Malayalam?" It was all coming out of a crude affection, not out of communal hatred, but it was hard to take for a sensitive boy who did not want to be ashamed of his allegiance to the Christian faith. After all, a good third of our local community were Christians, and my family belonged to the ancient community of the Thomas Christians, pure Indians whose Indian ancestors had lived in Kerala as Christians for nearly as long as Christianity has existed in the world, tracing their origin to Thomas, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ.

But being abused by teachers in class was part of the game of school education in that society, and one had to take it all in one's stride. I was small, compared to my classmates, and also slightly pale and anemic. So one of the nicknames that stuck to me was yellow frog (*Manhathavala*). That too, one learned to live with. The other nickname was meant to be both complimentary and jeering at the same time with a tinge of playful envy, I presume: "Hammerhead"

(*Kottodithalayan*). It referred to my small body and rather longish head. I find it difficult even today to buy a hat that fits my long head. A 7 1/2 size does not quite fit. I do not think that the size of my head has anything to do with its content, except that at times I do seem to have a swollen head!

I had a few dramatic achievements to my credit; nothing whatever in sports or arts. The prizes were largely in elocution and essay competitions. One of these elocutions as a ninth-grader was pure showmanship on my part. I had managed to memorize a particularly bombastic passage from an Indian humor magazine and delivered it as my oration. Of course everybody knew I could not have written it myself. Neither did I claim that. In fact I did not know the meaning of half the words I pronounced. But it was rather smoothly delivered. It must have been the comic incongruity between my own size and the size of my words and sentences that fascinated my judges and hearers. I still remember parts of it, and with your kind permission, let me recall some of it here. It went somewhat as follows:

In promulgating your esoteric cogitations, or articulating your superficial sentimentalities and amicable philosophical or psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your extemporaneous descantings and unpremeditated expatiations have intelligibility and veracious vivacity, without rodomontade or parsimical bombast. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic profundity, pompous prolixity, psittaceous vacuity, ostentatious vapidness and ventriloquy verbosity. Let your conversational communications possess a clarified conciseness, a compact comprehensibility, a coalescent consistency and a concatenated cogency. Eschew all conglomerations of flatulent garrulity, jejune babblement and asinine affectations.

It went on like that for a while and concluded with this smart peroration:

In other words, talk plainly, briefly, sensibly and naturally. Say what you mean; mean what you say; and do not use big words.

It seemed to go over well, better than I had expected. I even got the prize. My head became a little more swollen.

A Child's Religion

I must say a word about my religious or church life as a child, for that was a major formative influence in my personality formation. My parents were both regular church-goers, my mother particularly so. All of us children were also to go every Sunday without fail, as also for all important church festivals. We practiced group family prayer at home in the morning and evening and observed all the fasts prescribed by the church. This, I must say, was fairly normal for the Orthodox Christian families at that time.

In fact, in the Orthodox tradition to which my family belonged, religious personality formation depended more on the regular observances than on doctrinal instruction. The family prayers and Sunday worship were central. It mattered little how much of it one understood. The important thing was the participation, and the subtle and subconscious ways in which such participatory experience affected one's personality structure.

The body was just as important as the mind in these observances, and not merely only what the eyes saw and what the ear heard. Seeing and hearing were in some sense fundamental, even when there was no conscious comprehension. Equally important, however, were the other senses: the scent of incense in the church services, the taste of the Eucharistic bread and wine, the smearing of the oil from the church lamp on your forehead, the kissing of the cross and making the sign of the cross, the myriad genuflections and prostrations, the tasting of the bitter vinegar on Good Friday, the holding of the palm leaf on Palm Sunday, the kiss of peace given and received during the liturgy by all in the special Indian Christian way (offering both your hands to your neighbor to interleaf with the two hands of the other, who does the same to his or her neighbor in turn), the gorgeous vestments of the bishops and priests, the peals of church bells and systrums, exercising one's own vocal chords in loud and spiritfull, if not quite harmonious singing of the hymns and chants, the white-clad deacons, the colorful decorations of the altar. All five senses of the body were to be involved in worship: sight and hearing, smell and touch and taste. The body must pray just as much as the

soul and the spirit, with the hands and the feet, the tongue and the lips, the voice and the breathing, posture and movement.

That was the system in which we had been brought up. And I must affirm the basic validity of the system, though much in it could readily be improved upon. I have dwelt upon this point in my *Joy of Freedom*. Many of the attitudes and tastes that I have carried over from childhood to adulthood came from this system.

The British missionaries who came to us in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century on a "Mission of Help" tried to tell us that all this was worthless superstition, and that only pure reading of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer (Worship Manual of the Anglican Church) and the singing of 'spiritual hymns' would do. They were just as much missionaries of the European Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries as of the western Protestant gospel. We are still very much under their influence because that influence is so pervasive in our culture. Too many people still think that a child learns mainly what he or she is told in so many words.

I believe all ancient religious systems practised something like that. It is all very well to speak about "pure" spirituality without dogma or rite, and even to create fresh ones tailored to order. But if any religion has survived for more than two generations, it has developed some of its own rituals and dogmas. Even the Quakers are no exception to this. The dogmas may not be acknowledged as such; the rituals may be more cleverly concealed. Religion is always a community affair; the idea that it is a matter of individual choice is a peculiar and mistaken dogma of the unacknowledged religion of our secular culture. No religious system propagates itself without a community tradition which invariably includes a system of teachings and a set of ritual actions. That is in the very nature of the human being. Even the most godless person does not live by critical rationality and individual choice alone. More on this later.

Sunday School

Despite all that has been said above, instruction, it must be stated, can be helpful, especially when it is given in the context of a symbol-

system that carries subconscious meaning. I myself benefited immensely from Sunday School.

The Sunday School is an institution of 18th century origin in England. Though Christians started it, its original purpose was not specifically religious, but the general education of slum children. Robert Raikes, the publisher of *Gloucester Journal*, not only started the institution for educating neglected and illiterate slum children through volunteer teachers (hence on Sunday), but also wrote a very persuasive piece in his journal about it. The idea caught fire and spread, not only in England, but also on the European and American continents. In the nineteenth century, as general education became more widely available in western countries, the Sunday School began to specialize in religious education, and that too for all church-going children, from slum or suburb.

The institution came to the Christian churches of India also about a hundred years ago. My parish church, Nadamel St. Mary's, only half a mile from home, had started Sunday School with four grades only, and I finished the four years by the time I was nine years old. A neighboring parish, only two miles from home, St. George's in Karingachira, had seven grades, and I joined as a fifth grader. They had good teachers by the standards of those days, and I did well. Soon I was asked to teach Sunday School in my own parish, and I readily agreed to do so, even while I was a student at St. George's. This was possible since the two Sunday Schools functioned at two different times on Sunday. I would go to the liturgy at St. George's in the morning, and would stay on for the Sunday School there as student. I would come home for lunch, and go to teach in my parish in the afternoon. It worked very well, for teaching is a good way of learning.

I am very grateful for this experience. At St. George's, one of the teachers I remember very well was Punnachalil Chacko Master, learned and inspiring. There I deepened my commitment to God and to Jesus Christ. As an eleven year old teacher, I myself became popular; I think I managed to transmit some of my faith to a few of my own students, who were only a few years younger than their Boy Teacher.

In my later years I have often thought about it. These parishes were not what you would call “aglow with the Spirit.” There was so much intrigue and petty quarrels going on all the time. And yet, it was in these very ordinary parishes with very ordinary men and women that I acquired the rudiments of my present faith. I cannot therefore dismiss the churches as irrelevant or sub-Christian. Despite all that was wrong, and there was plenty wrong by my present standards, the transmission of the faith goes on in these churches. Children and adults come to know God. And is that not important enough? How can I then despise or dismiss the churches as ineffective and unspiritual?

Preaching or sermons as such in church were neither altogether inspiring nor particularly edifying. The preachers were too unlettered and often downright boring. But listening to the reading of the Scriptures in church must have made an impact. By the time I was twelve, I had a personal knowledge of God and a sort of commitment to Christ. In fact I was on talking (prattling?) terms with God, with Jesus Christ, whom I acknowledged as my living Lord and Master as also the true manifestation of God.

Deacon Petros

Deacon Petros, MA, BD, LT, a second cousin of my father's, was one of my childhood heroes. He later became a bishop in our church, as Mookencheril Pathrose Mar Osthatheos.

He was a prominent social worker of those days, working among the so-called Untouchables of Cochin and Travancore. He was a great speaker, always itinerant, self-sacrificing, and lived a very simple life, identifying himself with the living standards of the poor people among whom he worked.

One day when he visited his ancestral home which was very near to ours, I went to see him as a little lad. The first person I met as I entered the house was his eldest brother, Mr. M. P. Varkey, a well-known rationalist-atheist. He was also on a short visit to his ancestral home. “Whom have you come to see, youngster?” he asked me. “If you want to see God, he is in the next room; if you want to see the devil, he is right here.” I was slightly embarrassed by the question,

because he was my uncle and in his sixties. I could not start an argument with him. So I meekly replied that I had come to see Pathrose Semmasen, and moved to the next room.

Deacon Petros received me with affection, and gave me the advice that I should live simply and serve the poor. He also told me that my paternal grandfather had been his Godfather. Obviously his grandmother was my great grandfather's sister or something like that. Anyway it was an inspiring meeting. He must have transmitted some spark to me.

Later, when I came back from my first stint in America, I tried to work with him. Somehow, it did not quite work. My ideas of working with the poor, and of supporting the workers were different from his. His ways were so rigidly set, and he would not change. I sought other paths.

Story of a snakebite

Here is a vignette from memory. I must have been ten. The open drains on both sides of the road in front of our house had flooded, and little finger-sized fish, escaped from the river, darted about in the drains. The harvest from our paddy-field had come in, and Pulaya (one of the sub-castes once called Untouchables, but not untouchable for us Christians, even those days when Hindus practiced untouchability) women, who were tenants of our farmland, were threshing the grain on the house veranda.

I was under strict orders from my parents not to step into the flooded drains. When they were otherwise preoccupied, I stepped out and started trying to catch the little fish with my bare hands, a rather frustrating experience. My neighbour boy across the street, aged nine, was watching my activity with interest, himself forbidden by his parents to step into the water. "There is a big fish right there. I saw it", he told me, pointing to a spot in the drain. I saw the fish or what I thought was the fish, and put out both hands to catch it. I not only missed the "fish" but on taking my hands out of the water, found that my middle finger was bleeding profusely. I had no idea what had happened. I quietly tried to cover my wound with a finger of the other hand, and tried to slink back into the security of the home. One

of the threshing women, who happened to be very fond of me as a child, spotted my bleeding hand, and cried out to mother: "Something has happened to the little master." Mother came running and attended to the wound. My eldest brother went out of the house looking for the "biting fish", and to my surprise and awe, with the aid of a long big knife, began examining some of the cracks and crevices in the open gutter. Out came a big water snake, a full three feet or more long. I suddenly realized what had happened. The snake was drawn by my brother to dry ground. I was surprised that it did not run away or try to attack his attackers. I had the impression that he was saying sorry for having bitten me. He was lying quietly on the ground. Of course my big brother, with the help of others, killed that snake then and there. I was watching, with some sense of regret and confused sorrow, not only at my own plight, but feeling sorry also for the poor snake.

Neighbors began to gather, as the news spread that Varikipilla as I was affectionately known, had been bitten by a snake. I was promptly taken to the snake poison expert, Valappil Varghese Chettan, who lived not too far down the same street. I was carefully examined and the verdict was given by the expert. "It is a poisonous snake that has bitten him, and the two fang-marks are there on his right middle-finger, for everyone to see. But for some strange reason, the snake has bitten without emptying his poison sacs, as if biting a frog or something for food." The *Vishavaidyan* or poison-doctor told my parents that there was no danger of death, but gave us some unguents and medicines to apply to the wound.

We went home, and by that time all sorts of uncles and elders from the community had gathered there and were sitting in a circle, in the center of which I sat on the floor, being administered unguents. Some of the elders, with singular inappropriateness, kept on haranguing and castigating me: "What kind of a big catch were you after? a salmon or a cod? You got what you deserved" and so on. It was painful. I was trying to sort out what had happened, how I was in danger of death, what could have happened if I had died, how my parents would have been sorry if I died. On the one hand I still felt sorry for that snake, which in fact had been rather kind to me, in not

ejecting his venom into me, but had unfortunately been killed. On the other hand, I was trying to escape any blame for all that happened, by thinking that my neighbour boy (Baby was his name) was responsible for the whole thing, for he had pointed out the “fish” to me.

The important thing probably was that I as a very young lad had faced the possibility of death, which I did with some measure of equanimity, confused, but not scared. As a youngster I realized how close death always was, to all of us. Is that not the sort of stuff that philosophers are made of?

Tension Builds

Tension had been building for some time. My father, who taught elementary grades in the local High School, was now senior enough for promotion and transfer. He was posted as Headmaster in some rural Primary School in an outlying village fairly far from home. If the new station was within single-bus distance, father could still stay at home and go to work, though the bus fare had to be paid. The names of the places where my father worked in those days now escape my mind. One that I remember is Malayalam school, Thoosam. I have no idea where that place is today. But some of the places where he had to work took half a day to get to, and he had to cross highly irregular and unreliable ferries. This meant going off on foot very early on Monday and coming home very late on Friday, staying week-days in some thatched hut rented out. The ferry was dangerous in the monsoon season, and there was no way of letting us know that he had safely reached his station. This meant high tension for mother, and we the five sons shared her tension.

Our poverty was also a source of tension for the family. Most of the neighboring families regarded my parents as fortunate, and to some extent envied them. They had five sons, all fairly bright, all prospective earners, and no daughters. In that society, sons were assets and daughters were liabilities. Sons, besides earning money for the families, would bring in a dowry. Daughters, on the other hand, even if they earned money, would benefit only the husband’s family, and they would have to be married off with a decent dowry

and would thus diminish the family wealth, which was always held collectively. Human worth was measured of course in economic categories even in those days.

But looking after the needs of a family of seven on my father's peak salary of Rs. 28.00 (about U S \$ 6.00) per month in the 1930's was quite a strain, even without having to worry about marrying off any daughters. The only extra income for our family was a little rice we could harvest twice a year from our half-acre rice paddy, plus a few coconuts every month. As the boys grew up, and the eldest was already in college, the strain became fairly intolerable. We knew what it meant not to have enough to eat, not to afford new clothes, not to splash on hospitality as our neighbors did.

My father had managed somehow to acquire the small house next door to us. Renting it out was supposed to supplement our income. But if I remember right, the rent actually was Rs. 2.50 (50 US cents) a month. And the tenant we landed was a semi-criminal from the Devadasi (temple-prostitute) community. He not only failed to pay the rent, but also mistreated his own wife and children, and abused all of us including mother for being extortionate. There was no way of evicting him, for he simply refused to leave. That added to the tension no end, especially when Father was away in his school during weekdays.

There must have been other sources of tension which our parents spared us from knowing. In the midst of all this, mother remained a paragon of charity and goodwill, always helping those in need to the maximum extent of her capacity. I remember her kindness to beggars, to the sick in the neighborhood, to wayfarers, and the destitute. She was particularly hospitable and kind to poor peasants who came to the market, carrying heavy burdens of hay or vegetables to sell.

The market was a few yards from our house, and the peasants would come to our house, after selling their wares, to cook a rice-brew for themselves. One memory is particularly fresh in my mind, of an unlettered Christian peasant by the name Ethapanos (Stephen). He was in his fifties. With the few rupees he had received by selling his bale of hay, which he had carried on his head five miles from

home, he had bought a new earthenware pot and had boiled a cupful of rice in it, with firewood and hearth lent by mother. When the rice-brew was cooked, in our backyard, before waiting for it to cool down, with the aid of a coconut-shell ladle loaned by mother, he was furiously ladling down the stemming hot brew. Obviously he was frantically hungry. I watched, as a little boy. I was surprised to find that he was consuming the rice straight, without any curry, side-dish or relish. At a suitable interval in the course of his furious gulping, I put him the question. "Brother Ethapanos, how can you eat that rice without any side-dish?" His reply I still remember. "There is enough Kanhi (rice-brew) here to fill my tummy. Why should I need any side-dish? Besides, I was very hungry." His bale of hay had probably brought him two rupees or less, and out of it he had spent quarter of a rupee on that earthenware pot, which he wanted to take home to his wife, and less than one-eighth of a rupee on the rice. The rest of the two rupees was what his family had to live on for many days. That was the plight of the poor in those days: hardworking, abstemious, dignified even when indigent. I admired my mother for helping them without damaging their dignity, despite her own tensions and troubles.

Catastrophe Strikes

The scene is not quite clear in my mind. It must have been 1935, and I should then be 13. My mother was in bed with a high fever. Suddenly she got up with a great surge of energy, went out of the house, opened the gate, and was talking away quite loudly to the passers by. What she was saying made no sense. I watched in consternation. I could not grasp what had happened. Only after people had forcibly brought her inside the house, did it dawn on me that my most beloved mother had gone out of her mind. She had become mentally ill, manic-depressive, schizophrenic, insane.

I shall spare myself the pain of describing all my mother's actions in detail. Nor do I want to dwell on the incapacity of my father and the five sons to cope with the situation. All kinds of quacks and physicians (mainly Ayurvedic) were consulted, but to no avail. In her manic phase, she was virtually impossible to control, and was often violent. Quite frequently she would disappear from the house, wander

over long distances, and after several days, would return home, distraught and worn out. We never found out how she managed for food on these long wanderings. We supposed that she visited her brothers and other relatives because stories were carried to us from them. Sometimes when she came back, her clothes would be so dirty, giving us the impression that she had slept on the road. Father sometimes beat her up, while we sons watched helplessly or pleaded or struggled to stop him.

All of us five sons loved her deeply, and this was hard for all of us to take. Home life was completely disrupted. We had no domestic servants, and quite often we boys did some minimal cooking, or went without food altogether. My father, a man noted for his integrity and independence, suddenly went sour and sullen, sulky and petulant. Joy had gone from the home and gloom had descended.

There were two things that irked me no end: one was the violence, and the other the social opprobrium.

Father was cruel when he lost his temper at mother's tantrums. He would beat her up, with the bare hand or with a stick. Mother just took the beatings in her stride, only becoming more and more abusive. And we sons, who loved them both, had to watch this, with mounting pain and frustration. One saw no way out of the suffering. Even today, when I think of it, shudders run up and down my body.

The social opprobrium was even worse for a sensitive teenager. Some days, especially if father were not at home, mother would go and stand on the road side verandah to the south of our house, and would stand there, doing all kinds of pranks and talking all kinds of nonsense particularly when the road on the south of our house was full of children going to school. They were my classmates and schoolmates, and I was filled with shame that they watched my mother in this condition.

One memory is particularly poignant. I was preparing for my secondary school public examinations in 1937. Mother had been ill for some two years now. She was in a particularly violent phase, the family decided to empty the kitchen and lock her up in the kitchen room. Mother was protesting loudly, and asking us to open the door

and let her out. I felt sorry for mother, but had to stay in solidarity with the family decision. I was weeping profusely. The public examinations had started, and I had to do my preparations sitting on the door sill of the kitchen where my mother had been locked up. I was weeping all the while, just getting up in time to be at the examination hall before the exam started. Often I had no breakfast, for there was no one to prepare it. We often starved, for no one was in a mood to cook.

My eldest brother, Paulos, who had managed to graduate with a BA degree from Madras university, decided to escape from it all by going and joining the British Indian Navy as a petty officer. My just elder brother, Cherian, who had only finished High School and some training in typing and shorthand, was working in a small firm called the Christian company, located in St. Mary's Church House, Ernakulam. His salary was a pittance, Rs. 10 per month if I remember right.

Cherian could stay in the Church House, and get his food from a nearby restaurant. So I was left at home as the eldest of the three remaining sons, looking after my two school-going younger brothers in my own clumsy way. The misery was intolerable. No one to comfort us. One suffered in abject loneliness. My journalistic sorties to official functions and public meetings provided only temporary escape.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

After leaving school, I read voraciously. First it was all detective fiction. When I could get hold of books, I read also serious English literature. One such book was R. L. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. I was moved and fascinated by the book. It was about a scholar-scientist who was a split personality, a good man (Dr. Jekyll) who could occasionally and without warning turn into a monster (Mr. Hyde) and go out and do all sorts of wicked things like a sort of Frankenstein.

The book must have spoken subconsciously to a trait in my own character. There was quite a bit of goodness in me, but I knew that a lot of sheer wickedness was lurking underneath all the time. Ambition could not always be distinguished from love of domination and power,

from the desire for adulation and flattery. Yearning for love and affection often took the form of seeking glory and honour. I became addicted to praise and admiration, which was often forthcoming for a juvenile writer. I loved to see my name in print, in signed articles I wrote as a youngster. It delighted me to see my own reporting published in the newspaper and I often showed it to my friends. I loved to be praised, but I was afraid to be loved, mainly for fear that I could not take it when the love would be withdrawn. I was once the object of great love and affection from my mother, but its apparent withdrawal as a result of her illness was a trauma that I never got over. My personality was unmistakably dual and unintegrated.

Whether as a form of catharsis or not, I decided to translate *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* into Malayalam. I produced a hundred page manuscript, but did not seek a publisher. I kept it with me for a long time, with my published texts. One fine day, after having been absent from home for years on jobs outside, I discovered that my father had disposed it all off as waste paper. I was stricken with grief.

Exploits of an Under-age Reporter

My dramatic style of reporting once drew me into an imbroglio. It was a fairly sensational capture of a notorious con man called Vayalaran Shouri. Shouri was handsome, good looking, well dressed when necessary, and imposing in stature. He had many striking stories to his credit, especially in dodging the police. Once they found out that he was living by himself in a tiny islet in our Cochin backwaters, in a little hut that he had put up for himself. He was the sole resident of that islet, not more than 50 feet in diameter.

A posse of Cochin Police, five or six in number, got into a crude canoe and landed on his island one fine morning. They encircled the small hut, and shouted to Shouri, who was inside the hut but could not be seen: "Shouri, you are caught. Be good enough to come out and get arrested."

"Oh my masters!" responded Shouri from inside the hut. "Give me a minute. I am just having my morning Kanhi (rice-brew). I did not have a thing to eat yesterday. Let me just finish my breakfast, and I will come out."

“Take your time, Shourie,” the Police Officer shouted back into the hut. “But, don’t try any of your tricks. You haven’t got a chance. You are completely surrounded.”

“Okay, it won’t be a minute,” Shourie said from inside, in a plaintive tone.

Shourie did come out, in about a minute. But his defiance surprised the Police and took them aback, for they were getting ready for a meek surrender on the part of Shourie, and on their part a gentle operation of handcuffing him quietly. As Shourie came out of the hut, furious looking and menacing with a nine-inch blade sharp dagger in his hand. “I will chop off your heads like this”, said Shourie, chopping off a good one-inch segment of his own left middle finger.

The little piece of blood-dripping flesh flying off Shourie’s knife into the backwaters dazed and bewildered the policemen. In that half-minute when the police stood aghast, Shourie jumped into the waters and began swimming and diving at top speed. The policemen in their neat uniforms did not want to jump into the water, and so went and got into their little canoe, and began rowing furiously in the direction that Shourie seemed to have taken. Unexpectedly, Shourie came up from under the water behind them and overthrew the boat. The policemen, none of them great swimmers, were frantically trying to stay afloat and save their own lives, while Shourie quietly escaped.

The story was common knowledge in the Cochin area because the participating policemen themselves had narrated it to their friends. The press had published only a short account of Shourie’s escape, since they did not want to humiliate the police by telling the story of their ineptitude and incompetence. Shourie had become a legendary figure for the public.

So when Shourie was finally captured, and that too by a woman, it was top news. I got the story mostly from my Press colleagues and other friends. If it were today, I would have had to do much more investigation before reporting it as I did in the *Malabar Mail*. The prestigious and high-circulation daily *Malayala Manorama* picked it up from the *Malabar Mail* and splashed it on the front page with a double-column caption: *Penpillai Simham*. An equivalent in English

would be something like *A Lioness Springs*. The story I told, within the limits of my present memory, can be summarized as follows:

A rubber grower in our neighboring hill country in the state of Travancore had gone to Kottayam to sell his latex rubber, and was returning home, rather late in the day, with the money in his briefcase. As he was walking home, a considerable distance from the bus stop, an imposing and well-dressed pedestrian fell in with him and started walking in the same direction. They started a conversation and the rubber planter was soon charmed and impressed. Nearing his home, he asked the stranger his name and where he was from. And Shourie (that was who the stranger was) gave a convincing name and locality of origin. Shourie explained that he was on his way to visit a friend in a neighboring town, but had got delayed visiting all kinds of friends en route. He had missed the last bus to the town where he was going. The planter invited the stranger to stay at his home and resume his journey in the morning. Shourie accepted after the customary and polite initial "I don't want to bother you."

So they got to the planter's rather sumptuous home, and after a bath, was having supper. At that moment a messenger came with the information that a close relative had died. The planter was expected to go back with the messenger to the house of mourning. He fixed a bed for his guest on the outer verandah of his house, and leaving his wife more or less alone in the house with some housemaids, had to go on his way to the house of mourning, promising to return as early the next day as he could.

Shourie went to bed on the verandah, and the doors of the house were closed from inside. In the small hours of the morning, he got up and made quite a noise to the effect that he had been bitten by a snake. As the unsuspecting lady of the house opened the doors to see what had happened, Shourie jumped inside the house, and wielding his frightening dagger, told the lady, "Bring me the key to the cellar door where the money is kept, or I will kill you." The lady quietly went into her bedroom, followed by Shourie, and came out with the key to open the cellar or strong room of the house. Quietly, without saying a word, she unlocked the cellar door and let Shourie go in. As

soon as Shourie had entered, she locked the door and made him prisoner. Shourie kept shouting, but she quietly went out of the house at that unseemly hour to call for help. A Pulaya (once called Untouchable) who lived in a hut in their compound and was loyal to the family, agreed to overpower Shourie provided the Planter's family would undertake responsibility if something happened to the Pulaya. Meanwhile others had gathered to help the Pulaya, and the police had been sent for. There were no telephones those days. By the time the police arrived, the cellar had been unlocked; Shourie had been overpowered and bound with ropes.

So much for the story as I had reported it, based on fairly reliable testimony. It was sensational news for our region, for everyone had heard about Shourie and his exploits. I was not smart enough to wonder why other reporters did not pick up the story on their own. I had not reported the details of the earlier raid by the Police of my own state of Cochin and their failure. I had simply reported the story of the capture, not by Police, but by an ordinary poor peasant and a smart Christian woman. This capture had taken place in my neighboring state ruled by the Maharajah of Travancore, where the Police was notoriously corrupt. Travancore was ruled de facto by the Prime Minister or "Dewan" of the state, the scholarly Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, who was bent on destroying the economic and political power of the Christian Community which formed 40% of the population of that state. To that end he had used some of the methods that Hitler was using against the Jews in Germany. The police was his main instrument.

After reporting the incident of Shourie's capture I should have followed it up. I did not, mostly because I did not have the resources to do the investigating job. It was too dangerous for a teenage reporter to meddle with the Travancore police. If I had investigated, I would have found out that the Police had made him produce all his previous stolen goods, sharing the booty among themselves (there was a lot of gold jewels, I heard) and let him go free without any record of his capture.

I found out soon that I was in trouble. First it was a Criminal

Intelligence Department inspector from Travancore who came to question me about the source of my information. He must have been amused by my boyish looks, and was rather kind in his questioning. I asked him about the source of his information that I was the reporter. When he told me that it was the editorial staff of my paper, I told him they had no business to tell him, but did not deny that I was the reporter. First he asked me for a written statement that I had no basis for my report. When I refused that, he told me I did not have to give him anything in writing, but merely tell him the source of my information in Travancore state, so that he could get a denial from that person. I told him that that was not journalistic ethics.

Up to that point he was polite and so was I. We were sitting in a friend's store and talking very privately. The inspector now changed his tone and asked me whether I understood that the Travancore government could take legal action against me. I told him that I was a citizen of Cochin state, and owed nothing to the Travancore state. He asked me, "How old are you?" He suspected that I was not old enough to be prosecuted as an adult. I did not tell him that I was only sixteen. Instead, I asked, with a smile on my lips, but rather rudely, "What! Do you want to negotiate a marriage arrangement for me?" In our society of arranged marriages, middle men did the negotiating. He said simply, "You will hear again from the Police on this matter." That concluded our conversation.

I did hear again, soon after. This time it was a big burly Police Officer from Travancore, Anayadi (elephant-footed) Padmanabhan Pillai, a notorious Assistant Superintendent of Police. He came through official channels. It was our local Police Sub Inspector of Tripunithura, N. R. Subrahmania Iyer, who sent a constable to my home to call me to the local Police Station. I promptly went. I had never been to a police station before. Though a bit anxious, I was determined within myself not to be intimidated.

Anayadi was sitting with our SI in the latter's office. "My goodness! So young! You must be the same age as my grandson. Just answer my questions, and there won't be any trouble." That was his greeting. "Who gave you this information about the capture of Shourie? We

have absolutely no record of any such arrest. We do not even know where Shourie is now. Just give me the name of your informant, and I shall save you from trouble.” He was friendly and very paternal.

“I am sorry Sir,” I replied, “I cannot give you that information.” He coaxed me in his grandfatherly way, and told me that he was giving me wise advice and that I should not hold back the information from the Police. I persisted in my refusal, and our local Sub-Inspector, who knew me well as a journalist, joined in; “Give him the information; that is best for you.” As I continued to refuse, the SI said to me, “Do you know that I can arrest you and pack you off to Travancore?”

Cochin was a much less corrupt Princely State than Travancore. Our police could of course beat me up, but that was a risk I was prepared to take, trusting in God. So I answered, fairly boldly but not without fear: “Mr. N. R. Subrahmania Iyer, the laws of our state do not give you the power to do so. There is no case against me, and you cannot arrest me.”

The two police officers looked at each other for a moment. It was Iyer who said to me, “You may go, Mr. Verghese.”

That was the end of the story. I never heard from the Police again, though I was afraid for quite some time that there would be a sequel. Nothing happened.

A Teenager’s Political Life

In 1937 and 38, India’s Freedom Movement was just gaining momentum. Generally speaking, Christians were not very enthusiastic about it. The majority among them thought that British imperial rule would be preferable to self-rule. After all, the Colonial Masters were also Christians! I was not persuaded about this point of view. Especially in the princely states of Cochin and Travancore, we were ruled by Maharajahs and not directly by the British. We saw very few Britishers. They were not part of our social life.

Our own Maharajahs of Cochin, usually in their eighties, were very benign and God-fearing. The throne was given always to the eldest male member of a royal family of some 600 members. So he was usually eighty by the time he inherited the throne, and did not live

very long after that. Our own home was on Hill Palace Road, leading to the Maharajah's Palace, about a mile away. We saw him passing in front of our house very often, without ostentation or fanfare, except on festival days. As school children, we would go to the palace once a year, and we would be treated to sweets. Younger members of the royal family were my classmates, though they were forbidden to mingle with us socially. Some of the Maharajahs were great scholars, especially in Sanskrit, while others were quite simple-minded and the butt of many jokes.

One of the jokes went like this. As a man of eighty he was the Chief Guest at a Football (Soccer) Match. That was his first exposure to the game. After watching 22 people fighting for the ball, he asked his minister: "Why all this scrambling and scuffling for one ball? Why don't you give them two dozen balls, so that each can have one?"

With such darling dodos ruling us, we did not feel the weight of British imperial rule. There was oppression and exploitation in society, many inequalities and injustices, but I was not very much worked up about these in those days.

Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were great leaders for us, but we saw so little of them. I have heard Nehru once in my youth, and he impressed me with what he said and how he said it. Gandhi once came to our hometown and I was impressed with his simplicity and that toothless smile of his. But one of our people did him a dirty trick. Gandhi was in the habit of auctioning off everything that was given to him, and giving the proceeds to some charitable fund. In my hometown, he was auctioning off the gilt framed address of welcome presented to him. The one who bid highest was one Krishnankutty, who was a shady character. I think his bid was over Rs. 40, a considerable sum in those days. Only later I discovered that he was a dealer in forged currency notes, that he had offered Gandhi a forged hundred-rupee note and got a good 60 Rupees in change as well as the framed address!

But the local or state politics was more interesting to me as a teenager. I began to understand the need for removing untouchability, for which Gandhi also campaigned. I saw the need for removing

social and economic inequalities as time went on. The political meetings I covered as a reporter helped the process of my conscientisation.

One day I was covering a large public meeting addressed by Sahodaran Ayyappan, one of our great social reformers from the backward Eazhava community. I was impressed by his demands for social reform, and during discussion time, I asked him the question, rather unexpected from the press Gallery where I sat: “Why is it that you leaders do not let someone like me, who is only 16, join the political party?” His answer was picturesque and still rings in my ears: “We do not believe in plucking out the seedlings (of rice) from the field and throwing it to the cattle.” So I knew where I stood. I was only a seedling.

But I did become politically active, whenever they would let me. I took part in the election campaign for the Congress candidate from my constituency for the Cochin Legislative Council. My reporting was also often politically significant. But overall, my political sensitivities were hardly developed until much later. I was elected Honorary Secretary of the newly created Public Library and Reading Room in my hometown at the age of 17, if I remember right. That was a token of adult confidence in a youngster, to which I readily responded by doing my best to set it up, promote it and run it. I got a lot of my reading done in that library.

We started this chapter with a discussion on the meaning of suffering. With all my respect for Buddhism, I do not see the problem of suffering quite in the Buddhist way. I am more intrigued with the Greek and Christian ways of understanding and dealing with suffering.

Among the Greeks, the Stoics stand out in dealing with suffering. *Apatheia*, which certainly did not mean apathy, was their great virtue. Literally, *apatheia* should be translated as ‘non-suffering.’ For them, it was a synonym for happiness (*eudaimonia*) or freedom (*eleutheria*). *Apatheia*, somewhat more accurately translated as ‘impassibility’, was first applied by Aristotle to things as incapable of any experience or suffering. The Stoics applied it to God. *Apatheia* was an attribute of God. God cannot suffer. He is impassible, beyond suffering. The ideal for humanity was the same, to be beyond or

unaffected by suffering. The impassibility of God became the ethical norm for the Stoics.

The Stoics used *apatheia* to denote freedom from all feeling, being unaffected by all that happens, a divine impassiveness, or equanimity in the face of all external circumstances. The principle, more clearly enunciated by the last of the great Stoics, the ex-slave-philosopher Epictetus (ca 55-ca 135), already influenced by Christianity, was that in order to be truly happy, a human being should make oneself free from the vicissitudes of fate or fortune, from responsiveness to or affectability by, pain or pleasure. Our happiness should not depend on things we cannot control or have power over. It should depend entirely on one's own self and one's own will. Suffering would then have no power over us. That is freedom, that is happiness; that seems also, to some extent, to provide the basis for the post-modern notion of autonomy.

India's late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi expressed it once in this contemporary way, presenting equanimity with *nishkamakarma* (right action without desire for the fruit of the action) as the quintessence of Indian wisdom: "Unflappability is the better part of valor." That was indeed clever, whether it is the quintessence of Indian wisdom or not. We must come to that later.

Freud, in his *Civilization and Its Discontents*, gave us the rather simplistic classification of suffering into three kinds: a) that which is caused by the superior power of nature, e.g., floods, earthquakes, droughts, etc.; (b) that which is caused by the decay and eventual death of our bodies, e.g. disease; and (c) what is caused by the shortcomings of our social relations and institutions. The first two he thought were insurmountable, though we would say today that a great deal of it can be prevented or avoided. For the third, he offered the remedy of a more rational, non-neurotic approach to all questions, and the eventual elimination of the "illusion" of religion. To me this seems too simplistic and adolescent an approach, not even worth discussing.

We can indeed distinguish between suffering voluntarily chosen, such as in asceticism, and in a great deal of parental affection, and in

personal sacrifice for the sake of others; suffering imposed by other human beings either by mistake or by intention or even because of ignorance; suffering caused by what previous generations have done to make our inherited physical and social environment what it is; suffering due to lack and want, including lack of love and care; suffering induced by compassion for the suffering of others; suffering brought on by one's own folly and unwisdom; suffering caused by accidents, natural or otherwise; suffering that arises from one's station in life; suffering caused by the stress and strain of present living; suffering as anxiety, boredom and persistent sense of guilt; suffering due to the structures of present injustice, and so on.

What the Christian tradition has taught me is not to ask for the cause of individual suffering, or to resolve philosophically the problem of unmerited suffering. My task is to use suffering that comes my way, for the exercise of self-discipline and compassion. I do not know why we have to suffer, but I know that where there has been no suffering there is no development of character. I know that compassion is learned and taught by entering into the suffering of others and by letting others share one's own suffering, to a certain extent. Suffering seems to be Love's way, at least in this world.

Suffering does not open the door by itself. The key has to be turned; suffering has to be transmuted by love. Hate and despair can turn it into poison. I am grateful to God that however close I came to despair in my suffering-filled adolescence, I did not give up. My little faith helped me to cling on in hope.

Suffering is the key to the mystery of existence in this world. That is why God himself, supposedly free from all suffering, decided to come and partake of it Himself. Thereby lies the Grand Mystery. God suffers, in Christ, in us, even today.

CHAPTER III

FROM INDIA TO ETHIOPIA

THE UNMAPPABLE WAYS OF GOD

Two Heroes

During my teens, I had developed extra admiration for two heroic world figures. What was common to them was their determined resistance to insolent might. Signor Benito Mussolini and Herr Adolf Hitler personified that Fascist might they both resisted. The two heroic resistors were Emperor Haile Sellassie of Ethiopia and Pastor Martin Niemoeller of Germany. In fact I wrote feature articles about both the resistors during the days of my teen-age journalism. By a strange coincidence, I came to know both of them rather intimately and personally in later life.

Winston Churchill also resisted Hitler, but he was no hero for me. For me as a youngster, the British Prime Minister represented great pluck and courage, but more bluff and rhetoric, and not much concern for justice or equity. After all, Churchill did declare that he had not become Prime Minister of England to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire over which the sun never set. I was one among millions who sincerely and passionately desired the liquidation of that empire, so that my people could be free from the imperial yoke.

I will keep the Niemoeller story for a subsequent section. The Haile Sellassie story is a longer one, but let me narrate a few of the events leading up to my double Ethiopian sojourn, which began in 1947, the very year of our national independence in India.

Getting Away from Home

In 1940, when I was 18, someone kindly offered me a job, and I accepted, mostly to get away from the miseries of home. It was in Mattancheri, Cochin, some 12 Kilometers away from home. I became a clerk in a small Shipping and Transport firm, the Cochin Transport Company. There were two other office staff, besides the managing Director and me. The salary was about Rs. 15 a month. I could sleep in the office, and eat in a nearby restaurant. Two simple meals a day for a whole month cost only about Rs. 6.00 (US \$ 1.30) those days.

Two or three simple memories stand out from those days. Everybody in the office belonged to the same Syrian Christian community, and life was fairly congenial. But there were two of my neighbors who did not. One was a youngster, Balakrishna pillai, a Hindu, a couple of years senior to me. He worked (and lived) in the offices next to ours, in the same building. His philosophy of life was that youth was there to be enjoyed. He was so enthusiastic about it that he could not understand my home-bred reluctance to seek forbidden pleasures like wine and women, both easily accessible in the city. It was half courtesy and half curiosity that let me go out with him one night into some of the more lurid quarters of that city. That was enough. It left some painful memories, which have kept me from that kind of pleasure-seeking ever after.

The Man Who lived for Money

The other neighbor, who also lived and worked next door to us in the same building, was a *Satta* trader, one who bought and sold shares by telephone. I was told he was very rich, but he lived and worked in one room, with a chair, a narrow bed, a telephone, and a large safe in which he kept his documents and money. I never got to know him, because he was always at his telephone, morning till night. He could think and talk only about stocks and shares and about money. He seemed to have no family, no social life, no friends. He lived for money.

One morning we were in for a surprise. We were told that he had died during the night. It was a heart attack. He had gotten up from his bed, gone to his safe, and had collapsed with his hand still on the handle of the safe. The scene made a deep impression on me. We talked about it a lot in the office, but alone, I pondered about the meaning of the event. I suppose these small events do shape one's outlook on life. Perhaps not through conscious cogitations and rational conclusions, but through insights of an impressionable age, lingering long, hidden in the sub-conscious.

Appearing for a Competitive Examination

I worked in the Cochin Transport Company for about a year and a half or two. During this period, in 1941, when I was nineteen, I

decided to appear for a competitive examination for recruitment to the clerical cadre of the Indian posts and Telegraphs Department. There were some 300 candidates competing for a total of a dozen vacancies in the states of Cochin and Travancore. Eighty percent of the competing candidates, I understood, were university graduates, while I had only a high school education.

I had hardly hoped to be selected. I remember that I had answered some of the questions in the examination with an air of breeziness. Asked to write short notes on the Seven pagodas, I could not for the life of me remember anything I had heard or read about pagodas. Neither did I know what they were. Yet I gave the answer: "The Seven pagodas could hardly be in America, in Europe or in Australia. Nor do they sound African. So they must be in Asia."

Asked for similar short notes on the Atlantic Charter, which had been signed a few months before the competitive examination in 1941 (between Roosevelt and Churchill, before America had joined the war, signed during a conference aboard war-ships in the North Atlantic), I had insolently written: "The Atlantic Charter deserves to be submerged where it arose, i.e., in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean."

Not that I understood the Atlantic Charter and its purpose at that time. What I wrote was the result of intuition rather than insight. Today I know that it was a compromise on Churchill's part intended to draw the Americans into the War effort, which the Allies were on the brink of losing, Roosevelt was resisting, for he thought that the British and the French were simply waging war to protect their own empires against the Germans and the Japanese. Until Pearl Harbour in December 1941, Roosevelt still thought that America's economic interest was best served by profiting from the manufacture and sale of arms to the Allies while staying away from any direct participation in the war. The weapons industry in America had boomed and was boosting the American economy in an unprecedented manner.

Britain and the USA signed the Atlantic Charter on August 14, 1941, Roosevelt had made Churchill reluctantly acquiesce in the lofty but empty statements in the charter about the right of people to choose their own government and all that. In India, Mahatma Gandhi had

opposed the war as in principle wrong, and had been arrested by our British masters. We thought the weaker the British, the greater the chance of their letting us go free. With America joining up with the British, our chances would be fewer, we reckoned. Besides, the rhetoric of the Atlantic Charter was merely a revival of Woodrow Wilson's First World War ideology of justifying the war in the name of defending freedom and democracy. Self-determination for all peoples, yes, but not for the British Colonies. I saw only part of that hypocrisy at that time.

Postal Employee

Anyway, I qualified in the competitive examination despite my insolence. I joined the Post and Telegraph department of our colonial government. My salary suddenly rose from Rs. 15 to Rs. 39 (less than US \$ 9.00) per month! After an initial period of working at the Head Post Office in Cochin, I was sent to Madras for training in Morse telegraphic signalling. Our institute was in Kodambakkam, a district of Madras city, and I lived with other trainees in a nearby lodge. This was my first contact with Tamil and Telugu and Kannada friends, all rather bright youngsters. They were good company.

Besides learning Telegraphy, on my own I also acquired a reading and writing knowledge of Tamil, the local language of Madras with the help of some of my obliging friends. Tamil and Malayalam were kindred languages of the so called Dravidian family, except that Malayalam was more sanskritized than Tamil.

Many of the Tamil ways were interesting to me. I even learned to like Tamil food, without any difficulty, particularly since I had not been spoiled in my eating habits at home. I especially delighted in the idea of the milkman bringing his cow to our home, and milking it directly into our vessel, so that we could drink it with its natural, warmth. Madras was a much bigger city than Cochin, but beyond a few sightseeing trips with friends, I made no adventurous sorties into the city life.

The Quit India Movement

One lasting memory is of the Quit India Movement in 1942. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in December 1941, and there was

constant danger that India would be attacked too. Indian loyalty to the British, in the event of such Japanese invasion, could not be taken for granted. Churchill sent us his special envoy, Sir Stafford Cripps, a Socialist and a friend of Nehru and others, with the appeasing offer of "Full Dominion Status" for India within the British Empire. We in India, on the other hand, were pledged to "Poorna Swaraj" or total independence. Cripps was not authorized to negotiate, but only to make a pre-determined offer of promotion from colony to dominion. The offer was turned down.

One of the British arguments was that it would be perilous for India to seek to be independent so long as the Japanese threat was there, and that we should stay within the British umbrella of protection. Through Mahatma Gandhi, India replied in effect "You, John Bull, just quit India. We will deal with the Japanese as Independent India, using our own non-violent means. Your presence on our soil is a provocation to the Japanese." John Bull refused to quit, and went on to put some 60,000 Indians in prison. They even strafed some of our cities by using bombers to intimidate our people and suppress the revolt.

We were right about the Atlantic charter. The Americans, joining the Allied war effort in 1942, gave the British the breathing space in which to handle the revolt in India. And they handled it quite brutally and efficiently.

American warplanes were taking off from Bombay and Calcutta for strikes against the Japanese, while the British were shooting down rebel Indians.

As the Quit India Movement erupted, I was in Madras. My patriotism was properly kindled and I joined groups of protesting University students in Madras to shout with gusto: "John Bull, Quit India, Inquilab Sindabad" (Urdu for Long Live the Revolution). I even joined college students who were pulling down alarm chains on local trains in order to disrupt traffic. Of course, I did not myself pull the chains, but identifying oneself with those who did was enough. It was exhilarating, but doubly dangerous, because we were supposed to be "most obedient servants" of the British government.

I heard later that the Japanese did drop a token bomb near Madras, not in the city, but in the open countryside. Maybe their intention was only to show the British that they could bomb India if they chose to do so. Anyway I hazily remember reading in one of our newspapers that there was a bomb that fell and that it killed one chicken, but no humans! May be it was a trick of a British bomber; who knows?

Subhash Chandra Bose - Only a demi-Hero

This was the time when one of our heroic and gifted national leaders, Subhash Chandra Bose (President of the Indian National Congress in 1938), who had in 1940 broken with Gandhi and Nehru, started organizing the Indian National Army, with the support of the Japanese and the Germans, to invade India and to liberate it from the British. This volunteer army was composed of Indians caught by the war in Germany, British Indian prisoners of war released, precisely for this purpose, by the Japanese, Indian volunteers from Malaysia, Singapore and Burma and so on. It was an army of some 50,000, trained by Bose, equipped with Japanese and German help.

Bose proclaimed an Independent Indian Government in Exile in October 1943, and invaded India in the North- East (around Imphal), from Burma (Myanmar). Bereft of promised Japanese air support, the Indian National Army was quickly defeated and put to rout by the British Indian Army. Bose simply disappeared, and has not been seen since. They say he died after an air crash in a Japanese hospital in Taiwan.

That was fifty years ago. My own feelings towards this whole phenomenon were quite ambivalent. Mahatma Gandhi called Bose “a patriot of patriots”, and for me, he well deserved that title. He was self-denying, brave and forthright in defying the British might, and this I admired. He had qualified in Cambridge for the prestigious Indian Civil Service Examination, but he had torn up the certificate in public, to demonstrate his contempt for the Imperial system. This too thrilled me. But two things I could not approve - his compromise of principle in seeking the support of Nazi Germany for the liberation of India, and his foolhardiness in the invasion of India foredoomed to failure. Bose had the power, if only he were a better strategist, to

create a different kind of independent India, with a little more dignity and self-respect than we now seem to have.

On the other hand, Mahatma Gandhi was a spiritually much more attractive figure, truly Indian and truly universal, the best specimen of humanity our world has produced in the last couple of centuries. Bose, like Nehru, was a Cambridge trained Western Liberal, only more radical in his revolutionary methods. Gandhi embodied uncompromising integrity with genuine love and compassion for all. He was closer to the poor and suffering masses of India, identified with them in utter simplicity, deeply religious, and politically astute all the same.

The other Indian I admired was Rabindranath Tagore. His *Gitanjali*, *Post Office*, *Fruit-gathering* and other poems touched my heart deeply. Tagore had a feeling for the mystery of life; he was no Western Liberal; he was a poet of the Unseen, a bard of true Beauty and a hierophant of the Holy. My post office colleague and friend Varghese Mathew, whom we affectionately called *Chinthan* (Thinker), not only frequently read Tagore to me, but even recited long Tagore passages from memory. Tagore, though ardent in this own way for India's freedom, kept some distance from both Gandhi and Nehru, and did not occupy the center of India's freedom struggle. I have often thought that Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru together constituted the triptych icon of independent India as it emerged in 1947.

Trade Union Secretary

I was soon elected Associate Secretary of the Indian post and Telegraph Union for the states of Travancore and Cochin. It thus fell to me to help organize the first nation-wide post and Telegraph workers' strike against the British within the limits of our two states. Many of our more reasonable demands were met by the colonial authorities, and the strike was called off at the last moment to avoid inconvenience to the general public.

When I resigned my post office job in 1947 and left for Ethiopia, the Indian Trade Union Journal published my picture and an encomium.

Drifting Rudderless

In 1947, I was working in Ernakulam. I could even afford to rent a house and engage a servant. My youngest brother, Abraham, was staying with me and going to College, doing his B.com. My eldest brother, Paulose, was in the British Indian Navy, stationed in Bombay. His young and childless wife was also staying with us in Ernakulam, since the situation at our home in Tripunithura was still intolerably bad.

I was popular and moderately happy, but basically dissatisfied with the kind of life I was living. I went to church regularly and without fail. The conversation with God continued through these years. I was always making excuses to God for the way I was living, a life not outrageously evil or sinful, but nonetheless fairly pointless: trivial pursuits, trackless wandering, unpurposeful living. And no romance worth talking about. No one had come around to catch my fancy that much.

Death of a Friend - A Major Turning Point

One day I had the news about the sudden death of a middle aged neighbor and friend, Dr. Puthooran. He was a successful ophthalmologist, in apparently good health and a vigorous sports man. He had died of heart failure, at the entrance gate of his tennis club, with racket in hand. I was both sad and shocked, pensive about the fleeting character of life. I had a long conversation with God that night in the solitude of my bedroom.

“Yes, my Lord, I know that I can also die like that. I should change my life and make it bear better fruit. You know I want to. But you also know my friends. They will laugh at me if I become overly pious overnight. I cannot stand that. So long as I live in this society, I dare not repent or change. But I promise you, put me in a brand new environment, and I shall be a different person, totally committed to your obedience, totally dedicated. I promise.”

I knew deep down inside me that the promise was only half serious. And I was half sure that God would not take me up on my promise. There was an off chance though that He might, since I was half serious. He was soon to show me that He would.

The next day was Puthooran's funeral. It was a simple traditional Orthodox funeral ceremony, begun early in the day and finished by 10 a.m. I was on telegraph duty on the 2 pm to 9 pm shift. After the funeral I was sitting in the radio store of a common friend of Dr. Puthooran and myself, Mr. Mathew Choolakkal. We reminisced a lot about our late friend. Suddenly Mathew said, "I have a quick trip to make to Alwaye (a town 12 miles away). I am driving. Do you care to come along? I will bring you back in time for the afternoon shift." I was glad to have a diversion after the funeral, and readily agreed.

At that point a white man walked into the shop, accompanied by a white-uniformed staff person from the neighboring Indian Airlines Office. The latter introduced the foreigner to us, and said: "He wants to go to Alwaye. Can you help him find the right bus to get there?" "We were just at the point of driving there," my friend responded; "You can come along, if you do not mind the small car."

He had been introduced as Dr. Robert N. Thompson, a Canadian, coming from Ethiopia. I was keen to find out more about Ethiopia and about Emperor Haile Sellassie. We chatted for a while, and then started on the half-hour car journey. I continued to prod him with all kinds of questions about Ethiopia.

In ten minutes we had crossed the border between Cochin and Travancore. Alwaye was in Travancore. Suddenly we stopped. There had been a road accident. A Travancore military truck had nearly collided with a bullock cart at the entrance to a bridge. In dodging the bullock cart, the truck had fallen off the road into a field some twenty feet below. Several of the soldiers standing in the truck had been thrown off the vehicle and were lying scattered on the field. One was bleeding profusely from a head wound. A small crowd had gathered, but no one was helping them.

"Why is no one doing anything? That man will die if he does not get first aid," said Thompson.

"Nobody wants to get involved with the Travancore militia or police," replied Mathew.

"I am jumping down to see what I can do," Said Thompson.

“I am coming with you,” I responded, and we both jumped out. We got some of the bystanders to get some water and rags, and we washed and bound up the wounds. Only later, I found out that Thompson had been a Chiropractor. Meanwhile Mathew had gone ahead in his car and soon brought an ambulance from the nearest hospital. The whole thing took only fifteen or twenty minutes, but a bond had formed between Thompson and me.

We proceeded on our journey. Thompson told us that his real destination was Kottayam, and that he was going to Alwaye only to catch a bus to Kottayam, to see Bishop C. K. Jacob of the Anglican Church. We took Thompson to the Bus station in Alwaye. Mathew asked me to stay with Thompson to help him with the ticket and all that, while he went and did his business in Alwaye. He came back very shortly, and I got in to the car to get back to Ernakulam for my work in the Telegraph office. Thompson said good-bye to Mathew at the wheel, and came around to say good-bye to me.

I was already seated in the car. He held my hand and said, “I have been impressed by you. I have come to India to recruit teachers for Ethiopian schools. The advertisement will be in the papers this week, and if any of your friends apply with a recommendation from you, I shall give them special consideration.”

Many things must have gone through my mind in a flash, including my half-hearted promise to God, only the previous night, to begin a new life if given a new setting. There was not much time for slow reflection, but the words jumped out of my mouth: “I do not know about any friends I can commend to you, but I am willing to come myself and teach in Ethiopia.”

“Stop kidding and get back to your work without getting late,” said Thompson.

“I am not kidding,” I responded, “I mean what I said.”

“Prove it by coming out of the car,” said Thompson.

I promptly got out with a look at Mathew, asking him to wait. There was no place in the bus station where we could conveniently sit and talk. We sat together on a bench in the ticket office.

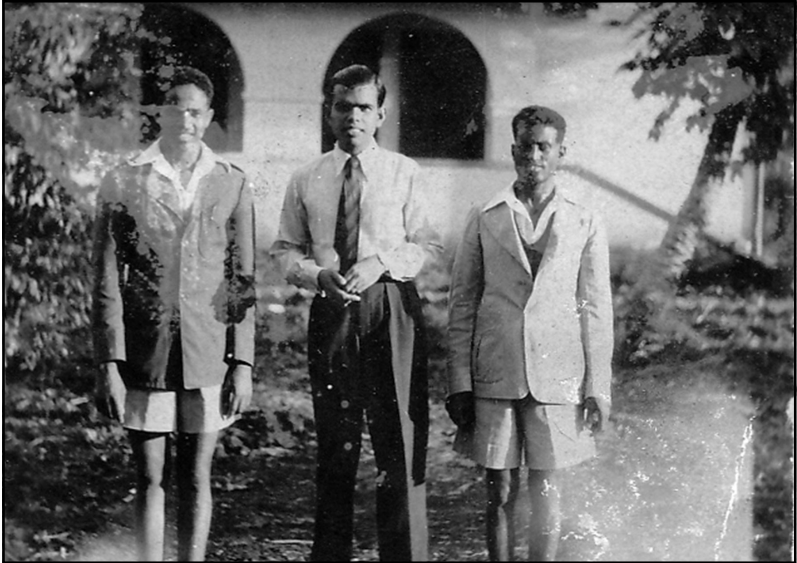
“I see that you speak good English. Can you also read and write?” he asked, taking out his newspaper and handing me his pen. “Write your name and address on it,” he said to me. When I had done that, he asked me to write some other sentence in English on the same newspaper! I felt slightly humiliated, wondering why he did not give me a harder test.

“I will give you an application form. Fill it up and send it to this address in Madras. We may call you for an interview. I have an Ethiopian colleague, waiting for me in Madras. I cannot decide anything on my own.”

So we parted. Everything went according to schedule. I did not consult anyone, but applied, went to Madras for the interview and got selected. I was told that I did not have the required qualifications to be a teacher, that I did not even have a university degree, and yet that I was being taken as a special case. We signed contracts, and only then I came and told father at home. He said I was crazy to leave a secure job in the government, venturing into unknown Africa. There was no need to argue with my father. I had asserted my independence ten years ago already, when he told me in 1937 that he had no money to send me to college. I just told him goodbye and told mother and brothers also goodbye.

Off to Ethiopia

It was a memorable journey. We were a group of 20 or so teachers, most of them experienced and all except me qualified, mostly from Kerala and Tamilnadu, a good majority of us Christians. The Ethiopian Ministry of Education had sent us a DC-3 Dakota, usually used for carrying freight. It had two metal benches along the side, with no cushions, but plenty of blankets. None of the comforts of air travel today, and not even the comforts of a normal passenger plane in 1947. We boarded the plane in Bombay and made several short and bumpy hops along the coast of India and Arabia, to Massirah Island, Aden, Dire Dawa, and finally to Addis Ababa. It took us some 18 hours, whereas today the direct flight, Bombay-Addis Ababa, takes only 3 ½ hours.



We were worn out by the time we got to Addis Ababa. Some of the teachers had brought young children along. An unpleasant surprise awaited us at the Airport. After a long wait before going through immigration, we were finally told that we could not land because our inoculation papers for Yellow Fever and Cholera were not in order. There had been an outbreak of cholera in India, and we were to go directly into quarantine, in an isolation ward in a hospital in town. We had to stay in the isolation ward for several days, if I remember right.

On about the third day, Emperor Haile Sellassie came to visit us in the hospital, to welcome us and to apologize for the inconvenience. We gathered together around the locked gate of the hospital, inside, while the Emperor stood outside the gate and talked to us through the gate by an interpreter. We should have been impressed, but we were all too worn out to feel anything but sheer fatigue and boredom. But we had seen the great man, and that was something.

Teaching in Nazareth

After a week or more of confinement in the isolation ward, we were released and taken to the Itegue Hotel, the only western style hotel in Addis Ababa those days. After a week in the hotel, we were given our various assignments. I was, along with two other Tamil Christians, to go to a new school, some 100 kilometers East of Addis Ababa, in the plains. The place, originally called Hadama, had been renamed Nazareth. We moved into a new house, with three bedrooms. One of my colleagues, Mr. Daniel, several years senior to me, was to be the headmaster. He, with his wife, occupied the master bedroom, while the two of us bachelors occupied the smaller bedrooms.

I was 25, and ready for all kinds of new experiences. But I had conveniently forgotten my promise to God about repenting and beginning a new life and all that. I taught during the week, and then played bridge incessantly with fellow teachers, sometimes starting Friday evening and stopping only late Sunday night. There was nothing else to do in Nazareth.

I taught in the third and fifth grades, teaching practically all subjects. The children were good, playful, but also highly respectful to teachers. I was quite surprised to find girls who would touch my feet as a mark

of respect. I thought that was a uniquely Indian practice. Ethiopia was Sub-Sahara Africa's only literate ancient culture, and the difference was clearly visible. I enjoyed teaching and I enjoyed the children, who were polite and refined. I soon came to identify myself with the culture, and felt irritated when some of my Indian or Sudanese colleagues kept on pouring contempt on the Ethiopians, in order to feel superior.

Amharic was the official language of Ethiopia, and our Amharic teacher in the school was a bright young man, only slightly older than I, Ato Telahun Damte (Ato is the Ethiopian equivalent of Mr.). I began taking Amharic lessons from him in private, and made some progress.

The only social contact outside the school circle for me was the local hospital run by Mennonite missionaries from America. I remember especially Dr. Paul and Nancy Conrad, Dorsa and Mary Mishler, Dan Sensenning with wife and daughter.

They were all very good to me. These were my first sustained social contacts with white westerners, and it took me a while to learn some of their ways. I went occasionally to their Sunday worship services, usually in one of the homes. I went to an Ethiopian Orthodox Church once, but found the liturgy totally beyond my comprehension, both in language and form. The American prayer meetings at the hospital were totally devoid of symbol or ritual, but at least I understood the language and felt the reality of prayer. And they seemed to like "Mr. George" as they called me, since I had told them that Verghese was the Indian equivalent of George.

A Divine Jolt Wakes me Up

One day one of my fifth grade boys came to me and complained that he was not feeling well. I felt his forehead with my fingers to see if he was running a temperature. He was. A blister had already formed on his forehead. I asked him what that was. He did not know. I advised him to go home and rest, and then go to the hospital and see the doctor. He was in bed with Chicken Pox and did not come to class for several days.

On the fifteenth day after I had felt his forehead, I was myself down with Chicken Pox. This is normally a child disease, and once you get a mild attack in childhood, you are supposed to be immune for life. I never had it in childhood and was therefore not immune.

The attack, in my 25th year, was far from mild. The blisters were cherry-sized, and I had them all over my body. They were excruciatingly painful; new ones kept coming up every day on my head, on my back, on my face, on my chest, on my seat. I could not sit or lie down because of the blisters. I was shut up in my room, and my fellow residents of the house, Mr. Daniel and Mr. Rathinaswami, asked me to lock my door and not go out of my room, for fear of giving it to others in the house. No one came to see me, and some food was occasionally slipped in under the door, like to a convict or to a prisoner.

The pain was sharp and intense; the loneliness was unbearable. Students wanted to visit me, but they were forbidden to do so, understandably. If I was thirsty there was no way of asking for a hot drink. I could not wash myself, or even clean my mouth and teeth. Unable to sit or lie down, I paced my room up and down. I felt this was not quite fair on the part of God to put me through all this pain. Like Job, I wanted to ask God for an explanation.

That is what I finally did. At the height of my pain, about the fourth day, I went and sat fiercely on my chair at my desk. The seat hurt, but I grit my teeth. Across the desk, on the wall, there was a color portrait of Christ (Salman's Head of Christ, a not too artistic American product) facing me. I started the dialogue or debate or whatever it was. I accused God of being cruel and unfair, devoid of compassion, and letting people suffer more than they deserved. I was talking quite aloud, in the anguish of my pain and the loneliness of my room, and threw a stream of abuse at the portrait of Christ. As the torrent of words rose in crescendo, I was carried away by the rhetoric of my own petulance.

Finally, and not without hesitation, I blurted out what I knew were insolent words: "Was your suffering on the cross anything comparable to what I am going through now?" That put a stopper to the flow of



my own sulky abuse. I felt I had said more than what I had a right to say. There was a calm. The experience that followed is so poignant that I have no words in which to describe it with some sense of adequacy.

A voice came, distinct and clear. I cannot be sure that any of our modern equipment could have registered the sound waves that reached my ears and the meaning that hit my heart. I heard those words. I do not know where they came from. I was speaking to God in English, and the reply was also in English. The tone was by no means rebuking or reproving; on the contrary, it was most compassionate and tenderly loving:

“Yes, my son, it was”

That was all it said. But it brought about a total transformation in my condition. My pain was gone, though the blisters were still there. I was wafted up to a higher plane of happiness where pain cannot penetrate. I felt an incredible lightness of body, as if I was being effortlessly lifted up on wings of joy.

I bowed my head in humble adoration. I surrendered myself without reservation, into the loving hands of God in Christ. And I said, with deep contrition: “To Thee, I bow my head, Lord, to Thee I surrender myself. I am Thine. Pardon me my folly, pardon me my insolence. Take me, do with me as it pleases Thee. Break me if need be, but give me grace and wisdom and strength to walk in Thy ways. I love Thee and I bless Thee with all my heart.”

The blisters were there, as before. No miraculous healing had taken place. The pain started slowly coming back, but I was a stronger person now and could easily and joyfully take it. The chicken pox took its normal time to heal, but I came out of that sickness radically transformed. I could not share my experience with too many people, but I renewed my commitment many a time those days. I may share with you some of the jottings in my diary from that time:

Nazareth to Jimma

I was in Nazareth only for a few months, from November 1947 to June 1948. By the time the next academic year came around, I was

on my way, in a government truck, to take charge of a new post in Jimma, in the wild coffee jungles of Kaffa, some 300 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa.

Jimma had the UNRRA School of Practical Arts, established in 1947 with the assistance of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association, with a view to giving both school education and arts and crafts training to young men who had become orphans during Mussolini's Italian Occupation (1935-41) and had grown up on the streets. It was part of the UN's post-war relief and rehabilitation operations in formerly Fascist-occupied territories. Nine Canadian families ran the project during the first year. The extensive campus with the school and family quarters for the teachers was well guarded with high walls and barbed wire fences. The sixty or so Ethiopian boys were sometimes prone to violence, and some had criminal tendencies.

Of the nine Canadian families, seven had quit during the first year itself because of student violence. A south Indian teacher, Mr. Sharma was in charge of the classroom work (five grades) while the Canadians had tried to look after the training in Agriculture and practical arts. I was posted to take over from Mr. Sharma. In overall charge was Mr. Howard Thompson, brother of the Dr. R. N. Thompson who had recruited me in India. Howard had formerly been in the Canadian Mounted Police, but had nevertheless dismally failed in trying to enforce discipline in the school.

The scene which encountered me when I entered the school compound after a wearying eight-hour journey from Addis Ababa on very rugged roads in a pick-up truck, was dramatic indeed. On the first floor balcony of the director's two-story house stood Mr. Thompson, with his wife by his side. The students, gathered together on the ground in front of his house, were addressing him through their leader: "If you have the guts, just come down from that balcony, and we will kill you." That was the gist of what they were saying to their Director. They were menacing in their looks, but I was wondering if they meant what they said.

A middle-aged Ethiopian gentleman, accompanied by half a dozen

others, came out of an office next door and approached the students, with a sense of authority. He was Ato Kirubel, an Ethiopian Roman Catholic who had once studied to be a Jesuit and had also served in the Army, well-dressed in European clothes, with a white shawl over his jacket. He sported a well-trimmed goatee. He was the Director of Provincial Education and had over-all responsibility for all the schools in Kaffa province. He lived on that campus, and also had his office there. In fact he had occupied one of the houses left by the Canadians.

“Go back to your hostel now, or I will call the police,” he ordered, in Amharic. They were arguing back with him, but I could not follow the argument. In any case they soon dispersed, grumbling, and went back to their hostel. I got off from my pick-up with my things and entered the house of Mr. Sharma, which I was to take over from him.

Sharma gave me some background. He was delighted to see me, a fellow Indian. “All this violence is directed against the White teachers. I have no problem with them,” said Sharma. “And you will have no problem with them, either,” he sought to reassure me. Sharma was Brahmin and a good cook, and he cooked some good vegetarian meals for us when we stayed together in that house for two days.

After Sharma left, I began to settle down in that roomy house left by the Canadians. I engaged a cook, which Mr. Sharma obviously had not needed. I went to the school and talked to my students. They were respectful, attentive and interested. No sign of violence or defiance. Some of them were older than me, for I was only 26. I invited them for tea in my house that day at 4 p.m. Most of them came, and we had a good afternoon together, sitting and drinking tea, chatting together. Around 6 p.m., they began to disperse, for their free time was over. After they had gone out, three of their spokesmen came back to my house.

“We have something to say to you, Sir”, their leader said, politely, and with almost diffidence. “What happened to us today has deeply touched us. This is the very first time that any of our teachers invited us into their home. And you treated us like human beings, not like as

if we were thieves and criminals. It makes all the difference to us. We feel like human beings again.”

I was moved to tears. It was all said with such simplicity and dignity. But it spoke volumes to my young and sensitive soul.

“Come every afternoon at four,” I blurted out, not thinking very much about what I was saying. “We will have tea everyday here in my home. Besides, we will also use the time to reflect about God and study the Bible together.”

So began a program of daily Bible studies, entirely voluntary, friendly and informal, in my home. More than half the students came regularly. And I put my whole energy into living and working with the youngsters. They were in the age range of about 16 to 27, not mere schoolboys. They had grown up on the streets and had taken to petty pilfering, mild drinking, and quick quarrelling. Both among my colleagues and in the town, they had a bad reputation. The authorities tried to use the police to restrain them, but the result was mainly that they had to share their booty and the alcohol with the police. They were not normally allowed to go into town unless accompanied by a teacher; they were virtual prisoners in our barbed wire enclosed compound, with guards at the gate.

Grappling with a Hyena

One day I took them out for a long walk into the countryside. They were about 50, walking double file, very docile and very disciplined. Suddenly I saw them breaking formation and running to a field on the side. I was quite confident by this time, that they would not run away like that without a good reason. They were fully loyal and devoted to me within a month of my being in Jimma. I had been ahead of the procession, and could not make out what was happening. I turned and ran after them, but could not keep up with them. As we got to that field, they had formed a circle, some of them with large stones in their hands, and there was a big wild hyena, standing in the middle, uncharacteristically furious and charging. Hyenas normally attack only sleeping people and domestic animals. When attacked they can be wild and snarling. I saw one of my boys charging the hyena with a sharp stone, and he had managed to break its lower

jaw. The boys soon became as wild as the hyena, and the poor hyena had no chance. They soon overpowered it, got a rope from somewhere and tied it up, and in fifteen minutes, four of the boys had it, still living, on a pole carried on their shoulders. They made a triumphal procession through the streets of Jimma, singing patriotic songs of triumph adapted to the occasion. There was a song which Ethiopian patriotic soldiers sang often in the fight with the Italians, which began: "The patriot is poison..." (in Amharic, *Arbanha Merzanha nov*), meaning poison to the Italian enemy). They changed it to: "The Student is poison..." (*Tamari Merzanha nov...*). We took the hyena home and tied it to the tree in my yard. We wanted to heal it and keep it. But someone came and without my permission, shot it dead. Only Ato Kirubel had a rifle there. The hide of the hyena was in my house till I left Jimma.

Conflict with Kirubel

Quite often in the previous year, my boys used to filch some of the high quality woolen blankets with which the UNRRA had liberally supplied them. The sale proceeds of two blankets were enough for a good drinking party for half a dozen. The process had gone on for some time, and where before the boys had two blankets each and some to spare, they had only one each in many cases, some none.

Soon after I came, the filching stopped altogether. The authorities were surprised. They knew that my influence had something to do with it. But Ato Kirubel would not acknowledge the fact. He called me into his office one day and gave me a lecture about discipline. He said he had been trained in the army, and he had learned that only the fear of strong punishment could enforce strict discipline in the school. He told me it was unwise on my part to be too friendly with the students, and hinted that I was ruining the discipline of the school by my lenience. "The stick", he said, "is the only language that they properly understood." I politely said that I should be allowed to try my own methods, and that I believed more in loving persuasion than in the power of the stick. We parted friends, disagreeing. At least so I thought.

Then one day it happened. Months after I came to Jimma, for the



first time, two blankets had been stolen. Ato Kirubel said he was going to catch the culprits and take strong action. But he could not identify the thieves by his methods. He wanted to punish the whole school. I told him that I would try to find out who the thieves were, and hand them to him. I begged to let me deal with the punishment, since I was in charge of the classes. He said he was the overall chief of the province and he would deal with the culprits in his own way. I pleaded with him to show mercy and not to be too harsh. He replied that he would know what to do with them.

The school had only 56 students, if I remember right. I called them together for an assembly, and talked to them about stealing and all that, in a moral as well as a religious context. They seemed to be moved.

“You know who amongst you has done this. I do not know. I request the two who did it to come forward and confess to the whole community what they have done.”

The students looked at each other, but no one said anything. I gave them time to think. They talked among each other, and I had a faint suspicion that many of them were furtively looking in one particular direction. Yet no one came forward to confess.

I produced a small box and 56 bits of paper. Giving each student a bit of paper, I asked them to write down the names of two people they suspected of having stolen and sold the blankets. They did not have to sign. They all promptly wrote two names and dropped the bits of paper inside the box. I took them out and classified them. Strangely enough, 54 of the 56 sheets had the same two names! Only two of them, obviously dropped by the two stealers themselves, had two different names. I quietly went to the two thus unanimously identified, and asked them to come and see me at home before lunch.

They came, very promptly. They were in tears.

“Why did you do it?”, I queried, with affection. I had no need to ask: “Did you do it?” They were trying to be honest in their reply:

“Why? Sir, we do not know. The compulsion to steal comes over us and we are helpless. We are driven to steal.”

I felt great pity for them. These habits acquired in childhood become soon compulsive when repeated often. I had no heart to punish them. I felt like embracing them. I stiffened myself with an effort, told them that what they had done was wrong, that they had not only wronged the school and their fellow students, but also themselves. I prayed with them, and asked for God's forgiveness.

"I have to punish you for the sake of the others. You decide what should be the punishment." I offered.

"Sir, you can punish us any way you want to. We will gladly take it. But, please, please, do not hand us over to Ato Kirubel."

"I have to. He has told me that it is his right to punish you, though I am your teacher. I do not understand, but I have to take you to him. I shall ask him for mercy, but I make no promise".

When I went to Kirubel, he was quite curt. "Just hand them to me, and I know what to do. It is none of your business."

He knew his business. When I saw what he did, I was chagrined and disconcerted, but there was nothing I could do.

There were two sentry boxes in the compound, each 6 feet high and 3 feet square, with a two-foot high gable roof. Each of the offending students was put inside one of these boxes and the door locked from outside. They were told that they would stand there until Ato Kirubel decided to release them. It was an inhuman kind of imprisonment by any standards. There was no facility for them even to fulfill their toilet needs, or to sit or lie down. I remember they stood there like that for two days. I was furiously angry, but there was nothing I could do. The student body was identified with me. The Canadian Director, Mr. Thompson, had quit long before, and had been replaced by a Norwegian gentleman, friendly and sympathetic.

The teachers in the school were also with me. The teatime Bible classes in my home went on as usual. I suspected something when Mrs. Kirubel asked permission one afternoon to sit in.

A few days after that, I received a memo from the Ministry of Education in Addis Ababa to the effect that students in our school

were not thenceforth to go to the homes of any of the teachers for any purpose. The memo also said that I had no right to have such meetings in my home or to teach religion to the students. Ato Kirubel also went to the student body without me, and told them that they were not to come to my house.

I did not know this until the students told me. The day he had spoken to them, a group of students came to my home as usual. We had our tea and our Bible study. Then they told me that they had been forbidden to come, but that they would go on disobeying the orders. I told them that they should not disobey orders, but that I would find out from the authorities what was going on. I went the next day to Ato Kirubel's office, and I was surprised to hear his clerical staff openly insulting me.

"You have come from India and grown fat at our expense" and words to that effect. These Ethiopian staff persons were previously quite friendly and respectful to me. I was surprised at the change. I wanted to talk to Ato Kirubel, but I was told that he had gone to Addis Ababa.

I came home and typed off a rather stiff reply to the memo from the Ministry of Education.

A Time of Testing and a Time of Prayer

Soon I found out that the whole atmosphere in the town of Jimma had changed. Everybody Ethiopian was hostile to me, even outside the compound. As I walked along the streets of Jimma, people would point their finger at me and say things to each other. I was being derided and mocked, I felt. Even among my own students, the old camaraderie was gone. A veil of gloom had fallen over the community; some students often seemed to avoid me. Some of the senior students, however, kept very close to me, and told me that someone had spread stories about me over the whole town. They would not tell me what the stories were. Only months later I was to find out.

Wherever I went out of my house, I had the feeling that I was being watched and followed, day or night. One day some of the senior boys said to me: "We are forbidden to come to your home. But there

is no prohibition against going out for a walk on campus. Let us go out to the bushes on that hill and sit there and pray.” It was a moonlit night, not too cold. We went out and sat in an open space among the trees. As we talked, I thought I saw some movement in one of the bushes. I looked more carefully, and I thought I saw parts of a white coat. I said to the half dozen students who had accompanied me: “I thought you Ethiopians were pretty smart. I did not think that one of you would wear a white coat if you wanted to spy on someone on a moonlit night.” I said it in Amharic, loud enough to be heard by whoever was in the bush. Suddenly the bush began moving furiously, and I saw a student in a white coat dashing away to escape being recognized by us. We laughed, but the feeling of being watched grew on me as time went on. I felt a battery of persecution had been turned on me. It hurts me when people refuse to talk to me, and I know that they hate me or have contempt for me.

Those few weeks before I left Jimma were again hell, like the hell I suffered at home in India when my mother went sick. But there was a difference. Spiritually, this was the most enriching experience of my life. For, in the midst of persecution, I could rejoice inwardly. The words of Jesus made fresh sense to me: “Blessed are you when they revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, on account of me. Rejoice and exult, for great indeed is your reward in the heavenly realms” (Matt. 5:11-12).

I understood that Jesus was not talking about any future reward in life after death. The reward or wages can be enjoyed here and now. I was happy inside, and could pray for hours at a time, praising God for being counted worthy of thus experiencing the mystery of rejoicing in the midst of suffering. It was a spontaneous, exhilarating, life-giving joy. It was an experience as constitutive of my spiritual life as the episode in my room in Nazareth, only a few months before. But I wonder if the joy of Jimma would have been possible without the nightmare of Nazareth and the catharsis of encounter with Jesus. In any case, I can testify that during those weeks I experienced simultaneously the depth of suffering produced by mockery, persecution and ostracism on the one hand, and great gushes of

spiritual joy welling up within me right amidst all that suffering, especially when engaged in prayer.

The response to my rude letter of protest sent to the Ministry of Education in Addis Ababa was slow in coming. When it did come, it was in the form of a curt telegram which said simply: "PACK UP YOUR THINGS AND COME TO ADDIS ABABA." A week later, I was in Addis Ababa, with my things packed up, ready to go home to India.

In Addis Ababa I went to the Ministry of Education and reported to the office of the chief, Ato Akaleworq Habtewold, Director General. I showed the telegram I had received, to his private secretary, who was a Goan from India. The man said that he was surprised that he had no idea who sent this telegram, that he had not himself sent it, but that he would enquire.

For more than thirty days, I went daily to the Ministry of education and waited in the visitor's room. Every attempt to find out why I had been called to Addis Ababa came to nothing. One day, Ato Efram Boru, the Deputy Director General, went through all my files and saw the injustice. He was already in tension with his chief, but one day, he dragged me into the Director General's office and asked: "Can you tell me why this man is called here? He has been hanging around for more than three weeks, and he still does not know." Ato Akaleworq, without so much as getting up from his chair, said to Ato Efram. "I do not want to see the man's face. Take him away." That was meant as a personal insult to me. Ato Efram took me back to his own office, tore his hair in disgust, and said: "I do not want to stay in this rotten place. I want to resign." And then more calmly. "Don't give up. Appeal to the Emperor."

Meanwhile the Indian Association of Ethiopia decided to take up my case with the authorities. They convened a special meeting for the purpose, and invited me to speak. I politely thanked my fellow countrymen for the interest they were taking in my case. I told them the bare facts of the case and told them that I was suffering on account of Christ, and did not want them to go to any trouble on my behalf.

Appeal to the Emperor was the only option left. I went to Dr. R. N. Thompson, the Canadian Advisor to the Ministry of Education, who was in full sympathy with me. He was very influential, and found out what the charges against me were; but he did not tell me. Only much later I was to find out that the charges were three: (1) I had insulted Ethiopia and its Emperor; (2) I was using my position as teacher to engage in religious propaganda and to proselytize the students, which was against my contract with the Ethiopian government; (3) the real reason for my inviting the students to my home was for homosexual purposes.

Thompson told me that I was to be expatriated to India as “an undesirable Alien”, and that the government of Ethiopia had already written to the government of India to that effect. My air ticket to Bombay had already been bought and I may be packed off any day now.

Thompson not only helped me prepare a memorandum of appeal to Emperor Haile Sellassie, and very kindly delivered it himself to the Emperor’s Minister of The Pen and Private Secretary, Ato Teferra Worq, a close friend of Ato Akale Worq, the Director General of Education. I was not sure that the appeal would get to the Emperor at all, and was getting ready to go back to India.

The next day there was a dramatic turn of events. Ato Akaleworq’s Goan secretary came and told me that the Director General wanted to see me immediately. I went into his office, ready to be fired. There was an interpreter present, since Akaleworq did not speak English.

“Who are you?” he asked rudely.

I was supposed to reply in English, but I decided to speak in my faulty Amharic.

“I am Paul Verghese, a humble Indian teacher employed by your ministry, working till now in Jimma. I have come to Addis Ababa, in response to this telegram which you sent me. I have been here for 35 days now, and I have not been able to find out why I have been called here and so badly mistreated. I have discharged my duties responsibly, and would like to know why you treat me with such contempt.”

I said all this in fairly fluent and literary Amharic, and he was quite surprised. The interpreter, who had no chance to translate, also registered signs of being impressed. The DG opened his desk drawer and took out a piece of paper, which I instantly recognized as the letter of protest I had sent him months ago.

“Would you write such an insolent letter to your government in your country?” he asked, waving the letter in front of me.

“Sir, in my country, if a government officer wrote to me the kind of insulting letter you wrote to me, to which this was my response, I would probably have taken him to court.” Obviously I was bluffing. But I continued, in the same spirit of bluff and bravado: “Sir, I love the Ethiopian people. In the one year that I have been privileged to serve Ethiopia, I think I have served the people well. I will go back to my country as a friend of the Ethiopian people. Please do not worry about my being able to get another job in India. For many years I was a journalist. My livelihood is assured, if I just write a few stories in the newspapers about my experience in Ethiopia, and about this ministry of Education. Thank you, good bye.”

The bluff seemed to work, more than I could expect.

I know now that it was the hand of God that worked. The DG smiled. I was still standing.

“Sit down, Mr. Verghese, we do not want you to go. I am impressed by your personality and by your mastery of my language. I must have been misinformed about you. That I will find out. We had decided to send you back to India, but now I must reverse my decision. I want you to work as a teacher, in some other school, in some other province. For that, I need a letter of apology from you. Just for the file.”

“Sir, I do not know what to apologize for. My conscience is clear and I have nothing to confess. As for continuing to work in this country as a teacher, I will finish the present contract, which runs till 1950. I will not work a day longer in this country.”

My faith in God and my dignity therefore, were fully intact. I was smiling, quite politely. He smiled too, in a friendly manner.

“Do not be in a hurry to decide how long you will work with us. We will decide that later. And it does not matter what you write in the letter of apology. I need a letter from you for my file. Write anything you like.”

“Well, Sir, would you mind if I stated in my letter that I was giving the apology at your request?”

“I don’t care. Give it to my secretary, today if possible.” He said it with a wave of his hand, and stood up. That was the end of the interview. The text of the letter of apology I gave is given below:

Addis Ababa,
March 1st 1949.

From,

T. P. Verghese,
C/o Mr. K. O. Philip,
Haile Sellassie Secondary School,
Addis Ababa.

To

Ato Akalework Habtewold,
Director General,
Ministry of Education,
Addis Ababa.

Ref: Yr letter 4820/2263 dated 17-5-41.

Respected Sir,

With reference to your above letter and in continuation of our personal interview at 10. A.M. today in your office, I wish to express my regret in understanding that you feel offended at my letter dated 21st Tahsas 1941 addressed to Ato Kirubel Basha, Director of Schools, Kaffa Province.

Though I feel perfectly justified in all my actions hitherto, since my letter referred to earlier seems improper to you, it is a pleasure for me to comply with your request to apologise.

I wish to make use of this opportunity to express my gratitude to you for having allowed me to explain things in person.

Awaiting your further orders, and wishing to remain,

Yours Respectfully,

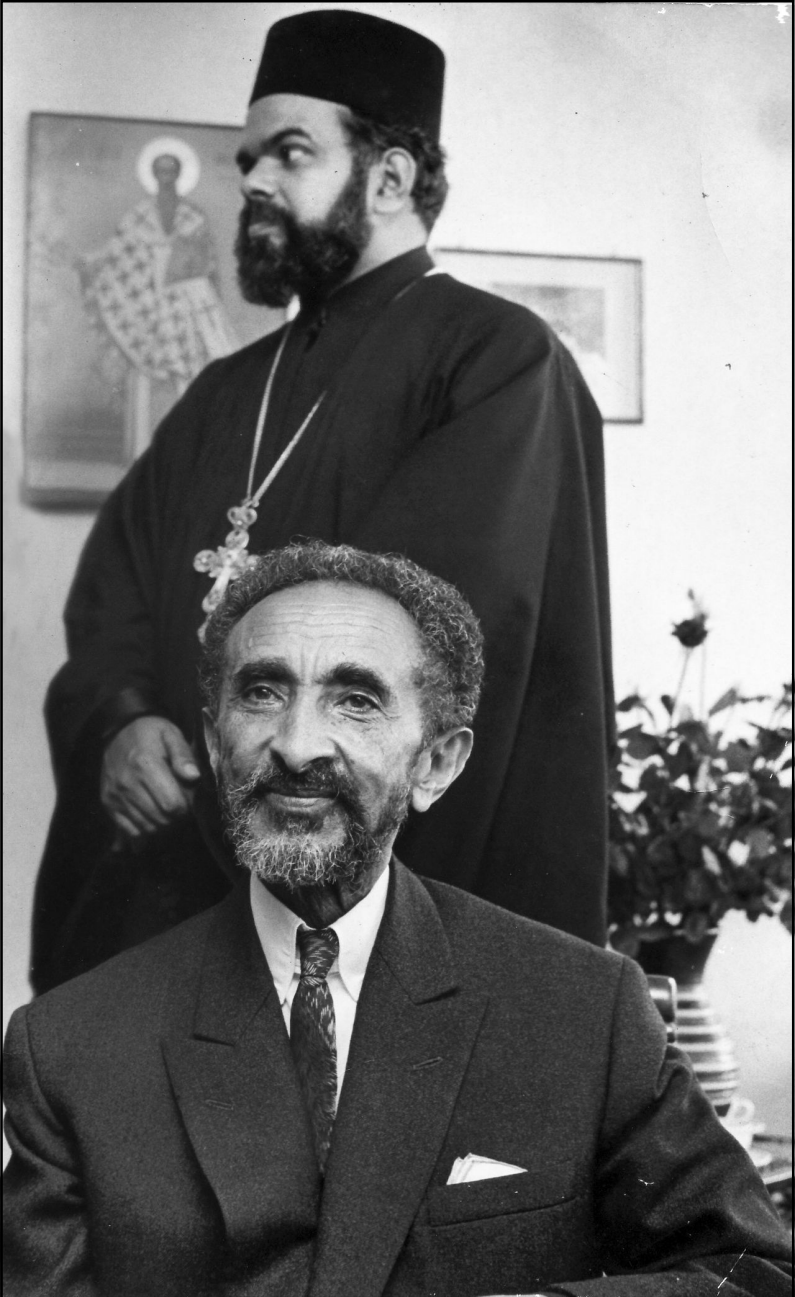
T. P. Verghese

In a few days I got a fresh order from the government, posting me as teacher of English and Mathematics, at the Agricultural College, Ambo, a prestigious institution less than a hundred kilometers from Addis Ababa.

Thus ended a period of tough testing for me. The Jimma experience and its postlude in Addis Ababa turned out to be also a school of prayer for me. I spent hours in prayer, with happiness in my heart and a clear and joyous sense of the presence of God. A little suffering for the sake of God had begun to cleanse me and purify me. I was aglow with the Spirit of God. The glow in my heart was a touch of heaven.

My suffering was beginning to turn the key to the mystery of life. The first important lesson I learned was that to suffer for the sake of truth was not the same as just going through any suffering, for example, the kind of suffering that fell to my lot in my earlier youth in India, or even in Nazareth. To suffer *unjustly* in the cause of truth, and to be mocked and reviled for the good things you had done, became a most sublimating experience. Of course, faith had to be there to undergird the experience. Equally important was a clear conscience, and not holding a trace of bitterness while one suffered.

And the experience of rejoicing in the midst of suffering puts the seal to one's faith in a loving Lord. All doubts vanish, and faith strikes new and deeper roots. To have tasted God's joy-creating love in the midst of pain-creating suffering makes one's faith strong and secure. One finds it easier then to take risks for the sake of obeying God, without anxiety. But one always has to move on.



CHAPTER IV

HAILE SELLESSIE I

**A BELOVED HERO TO THE END,
BUT AT THE END, MISGUIDED?**

The Agricultural College in Ambo, jointly run by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education, was also run by a team of Canadian Christian teachers, and they gave me a hero's welcome, since they had all heard about the Jimma episode. At first I had to stay for a few weeks in a rather shabbily run hotel. I soon moved on campus, lodging with another Canadian teacher with his own family and children. They were under transfer orders and soon left, leaving the house to me.

The teaching assignment was a bit on the tough side for me. I was asked to teach English and Mathematics. English and Algebra were not difficult. They were after all my own favorite subjects as a high school student. I had not, however, counted with having to teach Trigonometry, which I had never studied in school.

In the Trigonometry class, I told the students, several of whom were older than I (I was just past 26), that it was their bad luck that they had a teacher who had never studied the subject before. I promised to keep ahead of them by learning at home. But where I did not know the solution to some problem, I did not try to bluff my way through. I told them plainly that I did not know. And they liked that kind of honesty. They cooperated most heartily. Sometimes one of the brighter boys would show me how to solve it, always politely and deferentially. No loss of face for me.

Ambo was a Spa, a town of hot springs. The soil was volcanic and in the underground was always very hot mineral water. Even from the taps at home came only hot mineral water. Many people came to Ambo from all parts of the country for a bath in the healing waters. The water from Ambo was bottled and sold all over Ethiopia.

The Emperor Haile Sellassie had also a palace right next to our

college, where he occasionally spent short holidays. His eldest granddaughter, Princess Aida, lived there with her husband, Prince Mangesha Seyoum, the Governor of the District of which Ambo was the headquarters. I got to know the prince and the princess, and they also seemed to like me. They occasionally invited me for a meal.

The atmosphere in the school was quite congenial; I got along with the students, who were all in their twenties. The teachers were also friendly and cooperative. All the students lived in hostels on campus. All were boys. Sometimes I would take a whole class out on weekend expeditions to the neighboring mountains.

We had been told of a crater lake some 20 kilometers away, with an island in the middle, on which “savage” people lived, with their own language and customs. There was no road, but only a beaten track leading to the brink of the crater. Some of the boys were interested in a trip to this island, despite the dangers involved. We decided to go.

We, a group of about 15, started early in the morning. I was given a mule to ride, since the boys thought I could not walk that far. I did walk part of the way. There was another mule carrying blankets and food. We were going to stay overnight, possibly in the open air. The adventure was quite promising.

We had walked all day, and still there was no sign of the crater. I began getting a little anxious, because there was no time to go back and dusk was falling. I was wondering whether the lake and the island existed, or whether we had lost our way.

Finally we arrived at the lip of the crater, but it was well past 8 p.m. We could see the lake way down below, and we could spot the island because of the dim light of oil lamps in huts on it. We started our descent into the crater. The water level was at least three kilometers below the edge of the crater, and the way down was steep and as far as we were concerned, pathless, but full of tall trees.

We had gone down a third of the way, when we stopped and reflected. It was fairly dark, and we could not see whether there were any boats down below that would take us across to the island,

if at all we managed our descent to the water level. And if the people were as savage as they were reputed to be, why take the risk of an encounter at nighttime? So we decided to strike camp, but there was no level ground anywhere. It was a steep 70 degree incline, and I had found it difficult even to walk down in the dark.

Each one covered himself in a blanket and slept on the slope, some using stones as pillows, with at least two trees next to each to stop us from rolling down. There was no moonlight. The skies were overcast, I remember. I think we slept well, despite our anxiety about the morrow; we were all quite tired and the night was cold.

As day was dawning, we could see that a boat from the island had landed on our side of the crater. A group of people with kerosene lamps in their hands were wending their way up. We walked down to meet them halfway. Their leader, a senior person, spoke good Amharic, and asked us: "What have you done to us? Why do you come at night and stay in this dangerous jungle, full of hyenas and other wild animals? If something had happened to you, would we not have been blamed for not looking after you?" It was all said with such friendliness and cordiality that I felt ashamed.

I apologized profusely on behalf of my party. But he continued in that same reproving but affectionate tone: "Did you think we were wild animals or demons? You could have come down and we would have found places for you to sleep in our humble homes. Come now, and have something to eat with us."

We went down with them and ferried to the island, where a big party had gathered to welcome us. We were ushered in to a fairly commodious round thatched hut with mud floor, which must have been their community center. We were all given seats on the floor, and some *Tella* or fermented barley beer to drink. We told them where we were from, and they told us all about themselves. They did not eat any meat, though they had cattle. They lived on grains and fish, if I remember right. All of them looked rustically healthy, cheerful and bright. Their women and children were full of curiosity to see these strange visitors from the outside world.

They were preparing a big feast for us. All of a sudden we were told that the governor of the district, Prince Mangesha Seyoum was going to join us soon. He had come by a different route and had arrived near the crater in a Jeep, doing the journey in less than three hours. This was the first visit of the Governor to this island, and the local people made a big event of it, with dancing and feasting, but without meat. The Prince told me that I could have come with him in his Jeep, if only he knew I wanted to come. Anyway we had a great and joyous feast, with barley pancakes and spicy side dishes, but no meat.

The important point is that these isolated island people, without any social contact with the Amhara people of the land, were far from savage or wild. They were dignified, refined and courteous as well as hospitable. I told my boys that they should not always believe stories they hear about other people. I began to shed some of my own inherited prejudices about the alleged “savagery” of “primitive” peoples. People may not know how to read or write, but still be civilized in the sense of being spontaneously and warmly human.

A New Turning Point

One fine day, we were told that the Emperor had arrived at the Ambo Palace for a few days’ holiday. He wanted to visit our College, and we decided to put up a special program for him. At very short notice, we produced a short Amharic play and rehearsed it. Under my guidance, the students also decided to enact in English, some scenes from Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, centering on the murder of Caesar and on Mark Antony’s great funeral oration. Since none of the students were advanced enough in their English to memorize those long speeches, I took on the role of Mark Antony myself. I must have loved that kind of Shakespearian rhetoric, for I can still remember some of the lines, 48 years after I hurriedly memorized them:

“Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears:
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him;
The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones.

So let it be with Caesar.....The noble Brutus
 Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
 If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
 And grievously hath Caesar answered it....
 When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;
 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious:
 And Brutus is an honorable man.
 You all did see that on the Lupercal
 I thrice presented him a kingly crown.
 Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
 And sure, he is an honorable man.
 I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
 But here I am to speak what I do know.
 You all did love him once, not without cause:
 What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
 O judgement! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
 And men have lost their reason.... Bear with me;
 My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
 And I must pause till it come back to me” (he weeps).

The show went very well. Emperor Haile Sellassie appeared very pleased. I was, besides acting as Mark Antony, also directing both the Amharic and the English plays. At the end of the show, I made a little speech, in Amharic, thanking their majesties (the Empress was also there) for honoring us with their visit.

As soon as my speech was over, the Emperor beckoned me to his side and said, in English, “Where did you learn that Amharic?”

“Here, in this country, your Majesty,” I replied in fairly flawless Amharic.

“Here? How long have you been in this country?” this time in Amharic.

“One year and a few months, Your Majesty,” I replied, bowing politely.



“One year and a few months? Some of the Armenians who have lived in Ethiopia for forty years do not speak as well as you do.” The Emperor was laughing genially.

Naturally, I felt flattered and elated. He kept on talking to me in Amharic. “We (it was the imperial We) have never read Julius Caesar. Nor have we seen it enacted. Will you kindly get us a copy of the English text so that we can read it tonight?”

I readily agreed and got him a text. Only in later years I realized how the murder of a Caesar or Emperor was fascinating to him, since he was himself, like Julius Caesar, in constant danger of being killed by his internal enemies or by aspirants to his throne. Haile Sellassie's spoken English was not quite up to the mark, but he followed the Mark Antony oration with avid interest. He had been trained by French and French Canadian Jesuits in his childhood, and spoke French more fluently than English. But he had learned to listen to and understand English during the time of his long exile in Britain. He had lived with his family, in Bath, England, for several years during Mussolini's occupation of Ethiopia.

For me this encounter with one of my childhood heroes was a moving experience. I had seen so little of the world, and this recognition by the Emperor was a great thing for my natural vanity. I praised and thanked God for the radical change in my public image, from what it had come to be in Jimma. Strange indeed are the ways of God. But what soon followed was an even greater surprise.

Senior Amharic Teacher!

In the third week of December 1948 I received a strange order from the Ministry of Education. I was transferred from Ambo and posted to the Haile Sellassie I Secondary School in Addis Ababa, the then premier educational institution of the country. I was to be the Senior Amharic Teacher in the school, and this was in accordance with the wishes of His Imperial Majesty! I was flabbergasted. I could turn the offer down, but that would not be very wise. I decided to take the bull by both horns.

I could read and write, as well as speak Amharic, but I had no scientific knowledge of the language whatsoever.

All I had was the few lessons given to me in Nazareth by my fellow teacher Ato Telahun Damte. There were not many books available for me to read. I got hold of the only available Amharic Grammar book by CH Armbruster, and went through it once. It was a thick tome and I found the approach much too academic for young Ethiopian students. So I decided to write a new Amharic Grammar of my own, in a high school notebook. That took the whole of the Christmas holidays.

I went and joined the prestigious Haile Sellassie I Secondary School in Kotabe, on a beautiful hill, just outside of Addis Ababa. Most of the students were boarders, from the upper crust of society, the pick of Ethiopia's total student population. Special quarters were provided for me in one of the hostels. The Director of the School, by that time, was none other than Dr. Robert N Thompson, the man who had recruited me in India less than two years ago, and later helped me with the appeal to the Emperor in the Jimma case.

University education had not begun at that time in Ethiopia. The two other secondary schools, General Wingate School under British management, and Tafari Makonnen School under French Jesuit management were also prestigious. But our school, under largely Canadian management, was Number One. The other two schools had also an Englishman and a Frenchman respectively as Amharic teachers, but they were, unlike me, real scholars who had spent years on the study of Amharic and other cognate languages, and were quite proficient in them; though their spoken accents were far from perfect. Only at that point of correct (not Indian) accent and fluency I did probably excel them both.

I was to teach in the 11th and 12th grades. I had an assistant, a venerable traditional Ethiopian scholar-priest, Kanhgeta Hailegiorgis, a well-known literary writer in Ethiopia. He was most Friendly and helpful, and did not show any signs of resentment about a young foreigner being placed above him. I did not have a tenth of his Knowledge and command of Amharic. When I had a doubt in Amharic, I consulted him. If he could not help I could always go to the Minister of Justice, Ato Marsae Hazan, who had by that time written a book on Amharic grammar. He became a good friend.

The same policy worked as in Ambo. The very First day in class, I told my students that it was their language which they had learned from childhood, besides having ten or eleven years of schooling in it. I was a faltering learner, and I was likely to learn more from them than they from me. Again, they responded positively to honesty.

All the ministers of the Government for some time to come were graduates of our school, if they had a high school education at all. One of my own students was later to become Chief Justice of Ethiopia, after studying Law.

All the three secondary schools took their examinations from London University. I was very proud after my first year of teaching to notice that my students had not only outdone the other two schools, but actually surpassed our own previous record in the London University's Amharic examinations. It was of course not due to the superior quality of my teaching, but because of their enthusiastic interest in working with me.

Besides, it was the Emperor's favorite school. Almost every month he paid us a visit. The school was obviously the hope of the future for Ethiopia. Often he brought us a truckload of sweets and fruits for distribution among the students. Sometimes he would send for me from the Director's office, simply because he wanted to hear me speak his language, as he once told his wife in my presence.

It was at this time that I started regular private study classes in the Bible. Many students came, voluntarily. I was only a layman. So I got one of the monk-priests in town to help me, and to lead liturgical worship services. His name was Abba Habtemariam, a very intelligent and devoted priest. Later, during my second sojourn in Ethiopia, I was able to present him to the Emperor and he became famous as the Rector of the Emperor's Trinity Cathedral, then the largest church in Ethiopia.

Together with Abba Habtemariam, we ran religious programs, without contradicting or opposing the traditional practices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Jimma episode was by this time well behind us, and no one would stop me from taking these Bible study classes. It was during these private study classes that I realized

how abysmal my ignorance of the Bible and other religious matters were. I decided to correspond with some Protestant Christian institutions in America about going to College there and pursuing theological studies either simultaneously, or after graduating from College.

It was always the more conservative Fundamentalist Bible schools that offered me scholarships in America, and I was not very happy. Then one day again the way of God opened up.

The Way to Goshen

One day I was on a train to Debre Zeit (Beshoftu), a resort town with a crater lake, only some 40 kilometers to the East of Addis Ababa. To me it was a weekend vacation, but God had something in store for me. Sitting in the same compartment with me were some of the American Mennonite missionaries whom I had known in Nazareth. They were glad to see their old friend “Mr. George”, and soon introduced me to their companion whom I did not know. This was Ori O Miller, the Secretary of the Mennonite Central Committee in America, and chief of Old Mennonite relief operations all over the world. He was visiting the mission centers in Ethiopia, and had been told about my Jimma and language exploits. He was very much interested in my plans for the future, and I told him that I was planning to go to America for further studies. I explained that without a BA degree, I find it difficult to find admission to any respectable theological college. I asked for his advice.

“A degree is essential if you want to do further theological study. My brother Ernest Miller, who was formerly a missionary in India, is now President of Goshen College. I am sure he can find a place for you, and Goshen is a good college, located in Indiana, not far from Chicago. Give me all the details, and let me work it out for you.”

So he worked it out. I sent in the required forms. I was admitted and offered a scholarship, which would cover all but my travel expenses. I had put by enough from my savings to pay for the ticket.

Leaving Ethiopia - A Difficult Task

My three-year contract with the Ethiopian government was nearing its term, with the end of the school year in June 1950 (The actual time spent in Ethiopia would be two years and seven months, having arrived in November 1947). Around March, I received a letter from the Ministry of Education, requesting me to renew my contract for another three years. I very courteously replied that, as I had told the Director General during the Jimma episode, I would not extend my stay a day beyond my first contract. I turned down the offer of renewal of contract. I said in my letter that I was planning to go abroad for further studies.

I remember one day particularly, just before the close of the school year, when examinations were over. We were having the National Annual Sports Day in our school grounds. All sports teams in the country were coming to our school: the army, the air force, the Imperial Bodyguard, the police, and other schools. The Imperial Majesties were the Chief Guests. All the senior Government officials and the Diplomatic Corps were present.

I was asked to be the announcer, explaining to the crowds by microphone and loudspeaker, the main events and results. I did it in both languages, English and Amharic. I think people were impressed, because in those days it was a rare bird indeed who could handle sports matters in English and Amharic with such fluency. Rarely did a good speaker of English have the right Amharic accent; important people were talking about the announcer, making up legends in the process. It was again a day of triumph for me. I was becoming a legend and a celebrity.

Major Encounters with the Emperor and Family

After the sports event was over, the Emperor and Empress decided to give their family a conducted tour of the school of which they were very proud. It was a large family indeed: Crown prince Asfau Wossen, the eldest son; Princess Tenagneworq, the only surviving daughter; Prince Makonnen, regarded by people as his favorite son; the wives of the two princes; half a dozen or more grandchildren;

Prince Sahle Sellassie, the youngest son, a bachelor. The Emperor was walking in front. He called me to his side, and was talking to me in Amharic, still walking.

“We have heard that you are leaving our country”, said the Emperor to me. “Why?”

“Oh, I would like to study further, Your Majesty.”

“What are you going to study?” the Emperor asked me.

“I would like to study Theology, Your Majesty.”

“Where would you study theology?”

“In America, Your Majesty. I have a scholarship. Yes, Your Majesty. I have first to get a college degree.”

“You do not need to study any theology. You know enough now. You stay here and work with me. We need you in the Palace.”

“I have a scholarship and have already bought my ticket, Your Majesty”, I said, quite foolishly.

“That is not a big problem. You stay here. We want you on our personal staff.”

I was hesitating about what to say, but sensing that I was about to refuse, he soon added: “Don’t say anything now. We will talk to the Crown Prince, and you can discuss the matter with him.”

The Crown Prince was walking just behind, listening to the conversation. The Emperor called his son and said something to him. I withdrew, and did not listen.

The Crown Prince then came and said to me, “I want to talk to you. Can you come for breakfast at my palace tomorrow morning at eight?”

Next morning, I went to the Crown Prince’s Palace, which was just outside the Emperor’s heavily guarded Palace, near the six-road junction called Siddist Kilo. The reception was most cordial and the breakfast sumptuous. The Prince told me that his father had asked him to persuade me to stay. I could ask for whatever salary I wanted.

I would not be a teacher, but work on the Emperor's staff. The Emperor had taken a liking to me, he told me. The Emperor needed trustworthy people around him. He advised me to accept the offer without asking any further questions.

With some sense of embarrassment, but quite clearly I told the Prince that my vocation was essentially religious, and since I was already 28, and had no College education, this was the time to get some education. I affirmed my great love for the Ethiopian people and my very high respect and affection for the person of the Emperor. I was deeply touched by the Emperor's affection for me and his confidence in me, but I had to go, I told him, because this was a call from God.

Prince Asfau Wossen seemed to be deeply moved; he told me that he had never met anyone like me who would refuse such an offer from the Emperor. He said he respected my decision and would communicate the same to his father.

The Pressure Continues

That, however, was by no means the end of the pressure. I was called up first by Abuna Theophilos, the powerful Archbishop of Harrar, who resided in Addis Ababa. He was known to be very close to the Emperor. I had known him well, since he was also a great scholar of the Ethiopian tradition, previously famous as Liqe Liqawent Mahari. He was also the Chief of the Emperor's Holy Trinity Cathedral.

He called me to his residence, and used another tactic, that of scolding. "You are an Indian", he said to me, mockingly, but affectionately and without any taint of racism, "and Indians have a reputation for being ungrateful." He was trying to provoke me. He knew all about the Jimma episode as well as the rest of my Ethiopian career. He was in fact very fond of me, and I often visited him. So I narrated to him again some of what had happened to me in Jimma and the postlude, and asked him: "Who was ungrateful, Indians or Ethiopians?" "You are a cad", he said, "to be bringing up all that story. That was part of your getting to know us, and now you have become one of us."

Abuna Theophilos, still using the mocking and scolding technique, went on to tell me a parable. This was the story of a hen which had laid some eggs, and was hatching them. By some accident, a duck's egg had come into the batch she hatched. Only when the chicks came out, the mother hen noticed that one was a duckling. She brought it up with her chicks, but when the duckling grew wings, it left the brood of chicken and flew away. The moral of the story was that I was the ungrateful duckling which had been hatched by the Ethiopian mother hen, and was now flying away.

The Archbishop told me I was a fool and did not know how to make the right decisions. I politely countered that I was indeed a fool, and that was why I could not change my decision to leave Ethiopia for the time being. For me, this was a period when I prayed intensely and for long hours, and my conviction about the call from God was unshakable.

Even that was by no means the end. So many people, Ethiopians as well as Indians and Canadians, whether prompted by the Emperor or not, tried to dissuade me from the decision I had made. One of the last attempts had a touch of humor to it. I have already referred to Blatta Marsae Hazan, the Minister of Justice, the great expert on Amharic, who was also very fond of me. He invited me to his home one day. After the initial courtesies and embraces, we sat down on a couch, and he told me quite directly that the Emperor had asked him to talk to me. With paternal affection he told me that my decision to leave Ethiopia was immature and mistaken, He had two proposals to make. The first was official. As Minister of Justice, he was to confer upon me Ethiopian citizenship. The second was personal. I should marry an Ethiopian girl and settle down in Ethiopia for life. He then told me he had a grown up daughter, who was a secondary school student. She was not at home, but was in boarding school. He produced her photograph and showed it to me. "She is intelligent and good-looking, of fine character", he told me. He then went on to produce some of her notebooks from school and showed them to me.

Needless to say, I was embarrassed, even a bit confused. It was not polite to say a downright no to both proposals. I barely wiggled

out of the situation by saying something about my not wishing to marry until I had finished my education and so on. He still insisted on my accepting Ethiopian citizenship. I said could not consider it now, since I was leaving the country in a few days. That was the end of what was for me a very difficult conversation.

And I left Ethiopia in June 1950.

The Emperor Persists

I was a college student at Goshen Indiana, from 1950-52, working for a BA degree. In November 1950, I received a telegram. It was from His Royal Highness Prince Makonnen Haile Sellassie, the second son of the emperor. He was visiting America, and would be in Chicago for a few days. He would like to see me at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, where he was staying.

I went, Chicago was some 120 miles from Goshen. He had booked a room for me at the Hotel, which by my standards, was luxurious. The Prince was glad to see me. He said that his father had entrusted him with two important jobs. One was to find an oil-prospecting firm in America which would help with the exploration for oil in Ethiopia. The other was to take me back with him to Ethiopia.

He was a few years older than I, but we were on easy terms with each other. I explained to him that I had begun my studies only a few months before, and I had to finish my degree before doing anything else. He asked me how long it would take for me to finish my course. I told him that I was working overtime to complete in two years the 120 credit hours needed for a degree, which would normally take four years. He suggested that I make plans to go to Ethiopia at the end of that two-year program. I could give no such commitment.

“Anyway, I am glad you have come. I want you to help me with some shopping in Chicago. I went to some good stores, but my God, how racist these people are! They are positively rude, just because of my skin color. We won’t speak in English, and even pretend not to understand English at all. I will speak Amharic, and you translate for me. I hear they are more courteous to foreigners, even if the skin is black. Besides, you can make them understand that I am a prince and all that. It will be fun to see what happens.”

So we went shopping. He would ask for the price or quality of some goods in Amharic. I would translate into English: “His Royal Highness would like to know the price of this crystal vase, and whether it is genuine lead crystal.” The change in behaviour pattern of the sales staff was obvious. We had great fun together in many Chicago stores. And I got a good lesson in American race relations in 1950. My friendship for the prince also became more intimate. We had many conversations on American racism and its state then.

In Person Again

During my final year (1954) at Princeton Theological Seminary, we heard the announcement that Emperor Haile Sellassie was paying an official visit to the USA, and that one of the places he had chosen to visit was Princeton University. I could only entertain faint hopes of seeing him from a distance, since it was unlikely that he would address the multi-thousand student body or anything like that. So I was surprised to be called into the office by the distinguished President of our Seminary, Dr. John Mackay (whom we students fondly but with awe, called ‘Patriarch Mackay.’) He told me that there would be a reception for the Emperor to which only the heads of faculty departments were invited, because the whole distinguished Faculty of Princeton would run to many hundreds, and there was not time enough even to introduce all the faculty members. He told me that President of Princeton University was inviting me specially to the reception because the Emperor had personally expressed a desire to see me! He was himself moderately surprised.

At the reception there were about fifty heads of departments and heads of schools. I was the only student present. We lined up in a circle around a large reception room, and the President went around the line with the Emperor, presenting each professor to the Emperor. He heartily shook hands with each, but hardly stayed to mumble a greeting to each. As soon as he spotted me in the line, he began smiling, and to my embarrassment, was constantly looking at me, and not at the faces of the professors being presented to him.

As they came around to me the President of the University said: “This is the young man Your Majesty wanted to see, Mr. Paul

Verghese.” “Yes, I know him”, the Emperor responded beaming. And then to me in Amharic, “So this is your university. We have tracked you down. And we know that you have finished your studies and will be getting your degree in a few days. You are coming back with us to Ethiopia. No more excuses.”

I was positively embarrassed and pained. How can I have the guts to say no to the Emperor again? I prayed fervently in my heart, and said: “Your Majesty, I am profoundly touched. I am grateful for your Majesty’s affection and interest. And I do want to serve Ethiopia and you. But it is now seven years since I left India in 1947. I must go back to India and only there make my decisions.”

“There are no decisions to make. We are leaving this country in a few days, and we want to take you with us. We have a place cut out for you in Ethiopia. Do not go on stubbornly refusing.”

Other people in the room, including the President, were wondering what the Emperor was talking that long to an Indian seminary student. “I will talk to Your Majesty’s Secretary”, I said, if only to get out of my embarrassment. The Emperor moved on. I later explained to the Secretary that I was not in a position to come to Ethiopia at that time and that I had to go back to India.

A Visitor Asks for a Gift

1954 found me back in India, and for the time being at least, I forgot all about Ethiopia. There was much work to do in India, and life had become very full. I was still a layman, running a Meditation and Retreat Center for Christian lay people (The Always Fellowship House), teaching religion at the Union Christian College, Always, Kerala, working as Honorary General Secretary of the Orthodox Christian Student Movement of India, and serving as an Honorary Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of India. On all that later.

In 1956 the Emperor visited India. Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister of India. After visiting the North, Haile Sellassie came south to Kerala where I was. I had hoped to catch a glimpse of him during the grand reception in Cochin, but I missed the possibility, since I was

nobody important. The Emperor was to stay in the island home in Bolghatty near Cochin, of the former British Resident. I could not get anywhere near the boat that took the Emperor across to the island. As I was waiting at the boat jetty, somewhat frustrated, a part of the Emperor's party who had fallen behind came up, to take another boat across, which was waiting. Someone who had actually gotten inside the boat suddenly came out to the land, shouting "There he is! This is the man I was talking about." It was Prince Makonnen, the Duke of Harrar, who came forward to embrace me. "We have finally found you. My father wants to see you. Our ambassador in Delhi, His Highness Ras Imru, will talk to you about it. I must now get to the island. Father will be looking for me. I will tell him that I have seen you." He went back into the boat. I was glad that I had at least established contact.

That evening the formal contacts began. First it was the Ethiopian Ambassador in Delhi, His Highness Ras Imru Haile Sellassie, a cousin of the Emperor, a poet, a venerable figure for all Ethiopians. He told me that the Emperor had talked to him about me, and that he had heard a great deal about me before coming to India. He said that the Emperor had asked him to persuade me to go to Ethiopia. I told him that I was deeply involved in religious work, and should stay in India a little longer. Ras Imru later came to be a close friend, and we met often in Addis Ababa or New Delhi in later years.

The next contact was the next morning. I had been asked officially by the Indian Government to come and see the Minister who was acting as Indian host to the imperial party. This was Colonel J K Bhonsle, whose claim to recognition was that he had fought in the volunteer army of Subhash Chandra Bose, the Indian National Army which invaded British India for its liberation in 1942. I saw him in the Government Guest House in Ernakulam. I was in a simple white Khadi *lungi* and *Jubba*.

He looked me over, casting his eyes up and down, ostensibly somewhat sardonic.

"So, you are the man. Let me explain things to you. The government of India always seeks to please its distinguished guests. This guest,

however, has asked for something which is not in the government's power to give. He is asking for one of our citizens. On behalf of Prime Minister Nehru and the government of India, I would request you to accept the offer of the Emperor that you work on his personal staff in Ethiopia. You can mention the salary and other terms you want. His Majesty is ready to give you anything you demand. Congratulations."

There was a tinge of unconcealed derision in his eyes and in his tone. Who but a foolish Emperor would want to make such a thoughtless offer to what appeared to be a very ordinary man? Such thoughts must have been going through his mind.

"Sir", I answered, "I am deeply honored by His Majesty's offer. And I thank the Government of India for communicating it to me. I regret I am not able to accept it. I am a simple worker of the Christian Church. I am getting a salary of Rs. 75 (about US \$ 16) per month. And I am quite happy with my salary and my work. I would like to continue in that work."

"What! Do you know what an unusual offer and opportunity you are turning down? Do you understand what is being offered to you?"

"I believe I do, Sir. My vocation from God, however, is not to work in palaces, but to serve ordinary people, as I am now doing."

"You are an extraordinary man!" said Bhonsle, "You are exactly the kind of person that Prime Minister Nehru is looking for, just now." He paused and I wondered what was now coming. Then he continued:

"Prime Minister Nehru has a scheme for bringing some discipline into our nation. He wants to start in the high schools of our country. It is called 'National Discipline Scheme'; the idea is that each high school student would be required to do a period of service in our villages before he completes school. The Prime Minister wants a person of character to be in charge of that national program. He has asked me to be on the lookout for someone like you. Come to Delhi. We will fix it up for you."

His original tone of derision had given place to unconcealed admiration. I myself had heard of Bhonsle as an unmitigated

opportunist, and quite apart from his INA past, which was at best ambiguous, I had no reason to be particularly favourably impressed with his personality as it emerged in the conversation. I was trusting entirely in the grace of God to guide me in these encounters, and the words came naturally to my lips:

“Thank you, Sir, for your confidence in me. And I thank the Government of India for its offer to me. But this is a job which requires organizational skill, which I lack. I am better at working directly with people.”

“You will have plenty of opportunity working directly with young people in high schools, and as far as organization is concerned the government has its own institutional structures and methods in that field. You would not have to worry about these. You only give inspiring leadership. I will be returning to Delhi in three or four days, and you can join me there.”

“Thank you, Sir, but I do not think that is God’s calling for me. I will continue with my present work, in which I am quite happy.”

Bhonsle became quite friendly and asked me many questions about myself. Then he called his wife, a fashionably dressed young coquette he had met and married in Singapore, who was in the adjoining room, and introduced me to her, saying: “Look, this man is turning down the Emperor’s offer, and he has also turned down my offer on behalf of the Prime Minister, of the National Discipline Scheme job. Remarkable man!” We chatted for a while longer, and I was glad to be done with the conversation. Bhonsle ended up by saying that I should call on him the next time I went to Delhi. I said I would do so. Mrs. Bhonsle engaged me in conversation on several subsequent occasions during the Emperor’s tour of India, but I was scared of her coquettishness. She invited me to visit them when I came to Delhi. I politely agreed, but discreetly refrained from visiting them.

The Final Move

I had not yet seen the Emperor personally. I made no move to ask for an audience. The next day there was a grand public reception for the Emperor at our Church’s Engineering College in Kothamangalam.

I was invited and was seated on the front row in a large audience. I tried to catch the eye of the Emperor several times, expecting a smile of recognition. He saw me from the stage, but, instead of smiling, was glaring at me in apparent anger. I was depressed, for I had great regard and affection for the man.

The next day the Emperor was visiting the head of my church in Kottayam. The Emperor's church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, (often wrongly called the Coptic Church), was in communion with our church, the Indian (also wrongly called Syrian) Orthodox Church. The five ancient Asian-African Orthodox churches, the Egyptian (the true Coptic), the Syrian, the Armenian, the Indian, and the Ethiopian, belonged to the family of "Oriental Orthodox Churches", as distinguished from the family of Byzantine or "Eastern Orthodox Churches", comprised some twenty churches of Greece, Russia, Constantinople, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and so on. The two families had separated from each other in the fifth and sixth centuries, subsequent to the Christological controversies arising from the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD).

Baselios Geevarghese II, Catholicos of the East, the head of the Indian church, was already in his nineties. A dignified and saintly prelate, he was widely respected by all, and was visited once even by Prime Minister Nehru and other dignitaries. I had gotten to know him well, and I was one of his special favorites. I had been asked to act as interpreter, since my Catholicos spoke little English, and I could translate directly between Malayalam and Amharic.

The aged Catholicos had come to the front door of his modest residence in Devalokam ("the world of the gods"), Kottayam, accompanied by me and others, to welcome the Emperor. The formalities of welcome over, the Catholicos had to be held by two deacons and guided to the reception room, where he was to converse with the Emperor. I came behind, guiding the Emperor to the reception room. He had not even smiled to me. He now started speaking to me in Amharic:

"You are the most wicked man I have met in my life." The rancor in the tone was unmistakable. I certainly did not want to hurt the

feelings of the Emperor, for whom my great admiration was compounded with sincere affection. Without thinking much, I blurted out:

“It is not wickedness, Your Majesty. I am a servant of the Church. He (pointing to the Catholicos in front) is the head of my Church. I will do whatever he asks me to do.”

“I do not believe you”, the Emperor said. “Not he, not even God Himself can bend your stubborn will.” He was angry.

The formal conversation began soon between the Emperor and the Catholicos, and it was a delight to translate. The Catholicos began: “Your Majesty, my own feelings at this time are like those of the aged Simeon in the Temple in Jerusalem welcoming the Jesus child: I can now depart this life in peace, for mine eyes have beheld the face of the only Emperor our churches have.”

“Your Holiness, what greater happiness can a king worn out by the cares of state have than beholding the face of a saintly person like you?”

The conversation increased my respect for both personalities. Finally the Emperor said, and I had to translate:

“What about this stubborn young man? We need him in Ethiopia, and he refuses to come.”

“No one can persuade him against his will”, replied the Catholicos. “But he will do what is right and good, Your Majesty.” I was so pleased with the reply. The Catholicos had not tried to show off his authority over me or to ask me to do as the Emperor says. His reply was cautious and guarded. He had defended my freedom, but also left the matter open. The Emperor asked his staff to give me his address in New Delhi where he was proceeding the next day. He was expecting a communication from me.

After we had said good-bye to the Emperor, the Catholicos called me and said, in the presence of several prominent bishops and leaders in my church: “Everybody wants Paul Verghese. I need him in our church, the Emperor wants him in his country, and there is only one

Paul Verghese. It will be good for our Church if you go to Ethiopia and work with the Emperor; he is our Emperor; you will be able to help our church a lot from there; but it will be good also if you stay here and continue the work. I cannot tell you what to do. You must go home, pray devoutly, and make your decision in prayer again.”

I promised to do so and took his leave. I had gone a few yards from his residence, when he sent a deacon to call me back. As I came in, he dismissed all the others and asked me to sit down before him on the floor, on a grass mat which had been laid for me.

He talked to me affectionately for a long time, and said how difficult it was to make right decisions. He said he believed what he had said to the others, about my presence in India being very necessary for the Church, since my spiritual *labors* had been blessed by God in an unusual way. He then went on to say how equally good it would be for me as well as for our church if I would go and work with the Emperor on his private staff. It would be an honour to our church, and the Emperor himself would help our church through me.

He then said that I should pray and make the decision in the context of prayer. He said he would himself be praying that I make the right decision. He then cautioned me about trying to impose my own preferences on God in prayer, and then saying that it was God's answer to prayer. He told me the story of two pious Catechists, the son of one of whom was marrying the daughter of the other. Both were praying to God profusely, as catechists and evangelists are prone to do; the boy's father was praying God for a large dowry from the bride's family, while the bride's father was asking God that the dowry may be as low as possible. The Catholicos asked me again not to push God to get my own way from Him.

As I left his presence, I prayed fervently within myself, that I may be completely free from all self-seeking, genuinely and sincerely open to God's guidance. There was the possibility that the admiration and applause I received from people for refusing the Emperor had gone to my head. Who knows the ways of the heart?

God gave me an idea on how to proceed. I went back to my home in Always Fellowship House, prayed some more, and called together

three of my friends, all from my church: the Revd. Dr. K. C. Joseph, lecturer in English, and Prof. T. C. Joseph, lecturer in Botany, both from the Union Christian College where I also taught part time, and Mr. M. Thommen, my senior colleague and Secretary of the Fellowship House. I told them in some detail what had transpired in the three or four days preceding; also said that I had decided that I could not trust my own will. I would abide by any unanimous decision that the three of them together would make in prayer, whether I should go to Ethiopia or not. I gave them full assurance that whatever their joint decision was, I would accept it without question as the will of God, and act in accordance with it.

We were used to praying together as a group. We prayed together now that the will of God may be done. My colleagues thought it was too important a decision to be made on the spot. We should wait in prayer for twentyfour hours, and the three others should meet again separately to decide.

The next day we four met again. The other three had met and come to a decision. I was now in my own mind open to either possibility. It was my colleague, Mr. Thommen, who announced their decision. He said, "Vareechan, we all know very well that it was because of you that God had blessed this institution (the Fellowship House). It has now become a center of light to many. Without you, it may go down. For me, it will be difficult to keep up the work without you. Besides, Christian institutions and people as well as others, not only in Kerala, but also in the whole of India, have been benefiting immensely from your unusual gifts. Your presence is needed by our Church.

But there is another side to the matter. It is now public knowledge that you have heroically sacrificed a great opportunity by refusing the Emperor. It was in the newspapers also. They say that you have refused him a dozen times. Everybody admires you for this great sacrifice. We all admire your sacrifice and faith. If, however, this thirteenth time also you refuse him, you will be so proud of your sacrifice, that it will be difficult to live with you. For the sake of your own spiritual welfare and humility, therefore, you should accept the

offer of the Emperor. You should go to Ethiopia. That is our unanimous decision.”

It was not for me to question the logic of their argument. I had given them and God an undertaking, and my job was only to abide by it. The rest is God's responsibility. So I humbly bowed and accepted their decision, and then we prayed together for some time.

The Emperor had left Kerala by that time and was back in Delhi. I sent him a telegram accepting his offer. A reply telegram came the next day, asking me to go and see the Emperor again in Calcutta three days later. I promptly went and saw him in Calcutta, a good 3000 kilometers from Alwaye, and he was glad to see me. I remember he gave me three thousand-rupee notes, which denomination of Indian currency I had never seen before, (or, for that matter, any time after), and asked me to get some clothes and other accessories. The air ticket would be sent to me in Kerala. That was that.

I remember also that the Emperor asked me to stay on with his party for a couple of days. The next day the Emperor went to the races; I accompanied Prince Makonnen. He was keen on betting on the horses. He insisted on my betting too. I remember doing it once, for his sake, staking five rupees and getting back twentytwo. I have never done any betting before or after that.

Ethiopia - The Second Sojourn, 1956-59

So, that is the story of my return to Ethiopia, for a second sojourn which was about as long or as brief, as the first one, i.e. less than three years.

Soon after I arrived, the Emperor gave me an idea of what he wanted me to do. The first was to supervise the new projects of Indo-Ethiopian co-operation. He told me how impressed he was by the developments in India, and how great a man Nehru was. He wanted to develop these Indian relations extensively. He told me that the Indian experiment was more important for Ethiopia than the western form of development. He wanted me to look after the three projects he had already initiated, namely the Military Academy in Harrar, to be run by officers of the Indian Armed Services, led by

Brigadier Rawley; the Textile Mill Project in collaboration with Birla; and a new Indo-Ethiopian trade agreement under negotiation. Some advisors were to come from India, Mr. Ramachandran (?) Nair, a senior Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer, for Community Development, and Mr. John Barnabas, a prominent social worker of Delhi, for Social Affairs. I was myself to recruit other officers later, he told me.

The relations with India was to be a major part of Ethiopian policy in the future, and I was to be the Liaison Officer for all these. I would work very closely with Mr. Niranjana Singh Gill, the Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia, and also with Ras Imru, the Ethiopian Ambassador in New Delhi. I will not go through any particular ministry of the Ethiopian Government, but will be working directly with the Emperor. Formally I would be attached to the Office of the Private Secretary to His Majesty, and to the Ministry of the Pen. "There are many things I want you to do for us personally from time to time", said the Emperor to me in that first conversation after my arrival. Actually, these things turned out to be of various kinds: buying cutlery and crockery for the Palace use from abroad; reading the Emperor's personal mail and answering some; studying aid projects like the US Government's proposal to build a highway in Ethiopia and commenting on them; preparing drafts for the Emperor's important public speeches; summarising long English documents for the Emperor briefly in Amharic; giving him advice on proposed educational and social reforms; and so on.

Sometimes when he comes back from a trip abroad, he would give me a few books in English and ask me to read and summarise them in Amharic. Once when he came back from one of his frequent trips to visit his friend Marshall Tito in Yugoslavia, he brought back a book banned in Yugoslavia, by the opponent of Tito, former Yugoslavian Vice-President Milovan Djilas, entitled *The New Class*. I wondered how he got hold of the book. It was an indictment, not only of Tito, but of the whole Communist system, rather precocious for that time, i.e., 1956-57. Djilas was arguing that Communism may have succeeded in eliminating the propertied class of Capitalism, but had in fact only replaced that class with the new Bureaucratic Upper Class of Communist systems, which were more ruthless, oppressive and undemocratic than Capitalist bosses.

Another book he brought with him on one occasion, I remember, was Anton Makarenko's *The Road to Life*, a remarkable work by a Russian Communist educationist about how to rehabilitate social renegades and criminals by giving them limited responsibilities within an accepting and non-threatening community. It was a deviation from Lenin's wife Anna Krupskaya's views on Socialist education, but I thought they had relevance for Ethiopia (remembering my own experience with the boys in Jimma). The Emperor was pleased with my summaries, and told me that even in Communism, if you could remove the poisonous elements, there were some very good things. The ideas were passed on to the Ministry of Education, but nothing came of it in the end, it seems.

There was also the important project of the Rajah of Faridkot, in which the Emperor told me that he was greatly interested, for a massive immigration of Indian people to a vassal kingdom to be set up in Ethiopia and ruled, under Haile Sellassie as Emperor and Sovereign, by the Raja of Faridkot. I must claim some credit for eventually sabotaging this project, since I had a very low opinion of the integrity and character of the Rajah, who was seeking to regain in Ethiopia the kingdom he had lost in India when Independent India decided to put an end to all former Princely States. I knew the Emperor badly aspired to have an Indian Rajah under him. If there were to be such, I reckoned, they should be rulers who would bring credit to Ethiopia and India, and not profligates and philanderers who mercilessly exploited their people. The Rajah had put a lot of pressure on me to promote his cause, but I could not do so in good conscience.

I had an office in a building inside the Palace Compound, called the Duke Beith, or Duke's House. It was not accessible to the general public, but very close to the Emperor's residence and office.

Princess Sybil, My Secretary

One day soon after, the Emperor's 26 year old granddaughter, Princess Seblewengel Desta, came to see me, and announced herself. She told me in perfect English that her grandfather had asked her to work with me as my secretary. She had spent 17 years in British educational institutions in England, taken a University degree, and

had only recently returned to Ethiopia. She could speak a little broken Amharic, but could neither read nor write her own mother tongue. We arranged an office set up for her, but there was not much work for her to do since she could not handle Amharic and my memos to the Emperor had all to be in Amharic. A few weeks later, the Emperor asked me, with a twinkle in his eyes: “How is your secretary doing?”

Tactfully I answered: “Oh, she is a wonderful girl, Your Majesty, very capable, and very good in English. She is unusually bright and intelligent. Only thing is, she does not know any Amharic.”

“That is no problem”, said the Emperor. “You can teach her Amharic in your free time.” That twinkle was still in his eye. I was thirtyfour, an eligible bachelor; she was 26, bright and intelligent. The point was obvious. I was to be co-opted in to the Imperial family as a grandson-in-law.

I saw later that Sybil had understood the point too. I liked her, but marriage was far from my thoughts at that time. Her own religious convictions did not go very much beyond ordinary nominal membership in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and a little touch of personal faith received from her devout grandfather. But I could not for the life of me think of marrying a princess. I had to work with the poor, and I would not fit into an Imperial family. I decided internally to resist the pressure, trusting in God.

Sybil could feel the inner resistance I was putting up. I have no reason to think that she felt very much attracted to me; in any case I gave her no opportunity to express any personal feelings. I hope she did not feel rejected either; I have no way of knowing. She later married an Ethiopian aristocrat, who became the President of Haile Sellassie University, and was, alas, in one of the riots, killed by the rebels. She had children also. I myself remained single, puritan. She continued to work a little longer in the office of the Private Secretary, but soon gave up. I was given a new male secretary.

My own residence was outside the palace compound, so that I could receive private guests at home, which I could not have done if I lived in the palace. I had a car and a chauffeur, a guard, a housemaid, a cook and all that. My four bed-room house, not far from the Palace,

was not in the top class, but luxurious by the standards to which I had by then been accustomed.

One of the first things I did was to start a regular weekday Bible class in my home, which several Indians and western missionaries as well as a few Ethiopians attended. Before I knew it, there were six to eight Bible classes and lectures a week that I was running all over the city, in colleges and in homes. I was giving two evening lectures on religion every week in the University College of Addis Ababa. All these classes and lectures were well attended.

“St. Paul’s Hospital”

Just about the time I came to Addis Ababa, there had been a major bus accident in the northern part of Ethiopia. In which many Indian teachers and their families had either died or been seriously injured. One special case was that of Kunhoonhamma, a very young teacher’s wife from Kerala and her four month old baby. The husband, whom I never met, had died in the accident. The wife was in hospital, with 22 fractures, some of them compound. The bus had fallen off a hillside, in cool weather, at night. The baby, well bundled up, had rolled off the mother’s hold and rolled down the hill, stopped by a tree far below. Those who came to rescue the victims did not see the baby for at least 12 hours after the accident. When they finally found him, the baby was still alive, but totally unresponsive. He refused to take any food, or to respond to any cuddling or caressing. His stare was fixed. The doctors had great difficulty feeding him and keeping him alive.

The Emperor came to the hospital and saw all the survivors. When he came to the baby which had been separated from his mother who was unconscious, he tried his best to get a smile out of the infant, but failed. The doctors explained to him that he was shocked at the loss of his mother for twelve hours and had gone into a catatonic trauma, from which only maternal love could wake him up. The Emperor immediately ordered one of his household staff nurses to take over the infant.

It was a burly, affectionate fifty year old Tigre woman who gave her whole heart to the baby, and finally weaned it from the trauma,

after three days of continuous effort. Meanwhile the mother, in bandages and slings from head to toe, came out of her unconsciousness, but the baby would not respond to its own mother. It would respond only to the nurse. The Emperor often came to the hospital to see the baby, and sometimes talked to me about it.

When after months in the hospital, the mother was finally discharged, still plaster caste over her hip and legs, on crutches, with a baby who would not respond to her, there was no obvious place where she could go for convalescence, which would take several months. So came the mother, the baby and the nurse to my home and settled down. Meanwhile another teacher, also from Kerala, Mr. Nanoo, a Hindu in his late forties, had also been in the same accident, and been discharged from hospital, still on crutches. He also could not take care of himself, and so decided to move into my home. Thus my house became quite full. People used to call it St. Paul's Hospital. There were visitors all the time. It was open house, from morning till late at night, though I myself was seldom at home. The office and my evening classes kept me busy.

The baby grew up in my home, and became fairly normal. He went to school in Ethiopia. Later he went to India and finished high school, and was admitted to Madras Christian College. One day, when he was twentyfive, he swallowed a large quantity of sleeping pills and committed suicide. I went to the funeral. It was a heart breaking experience for me.

The Cocktail Circuit

I was a much sought after guest at Embassy cocktail receptions and dinner parties. The foreign diplomats must have thought that they could pump out palace information from me. The Indian Ambassador also frequently entertained me. The Russian Ambassador, Boris Karavaev, was particularly friendly; his main purpose must have been to squeeze out maximum information. There were times when I went to two and three cocktail parties in one evening, though I was careful not to let my evening classes suffer. Very soon I decided to give up whisky and hard liquors altogether, and to stick to wines and fruit juices. Ethiopian Government Ministers

also began inviting me home for dinners and parties. There were also the imperial dinners which were particularly sumptuous. I had become very fond of Ethiopian food, especially *injera* and *wat*. *Injera* was a large flat thin pancake, about two feet in diameter, made of fermented *teff* (a local grain) flour, folded in four or rolled up. *Wat* could be any spicy side dish with sauce, usually chicken (*doro-wat*) or meat (*sega-wat*) or split peas (*geq-wat*).

One of the most touching experiences was when a minister invited me to his house, and while at dinner, made quite a package of injera and choice dishes, kneading them together with his fingers, and then, asking me to open my mouth, put the whole lot in. It was a difficult experience for an Indian, but I had no option except to eat it. I was told later that this was a sign of great affection and warmth, though I found it slightly embarrassing at the time. But it was part of my acculturation process.

The same minister was once with me at the Race Course, when we had both accompanied the Emperor to watch the races. It was a Friday. The minister offered me a drink. I ordered tea with milk. He ordered a whiskey for himself. Ethiopians are very strict on their fasting laws, and do not eat any animal food on Wednesdays and Fridays as well as during Lent. Milk and milk products are also forbidden. He was surprised that I had ordered tea with milk on a Friday and asked me:

“Why do you drink tea with milk on a Friday?”

“Is it not better to drink tea with milk than to drink whiskey on a fasting day?” I asked.

He seemed baffled and said, “But, my friend, there is no milk in whiskey!”

Like all Semitic peoples, the Ethiopians do not eat pork; they also will not eat the flesh of any bird that flies, for they regard them as keeping company with the angels. I identified myself as much as I could with Ethiopian culture and behaviour patterns, including eating habits. But one thing I could never bring myself around to. That was eating raw meat. For the Amhara this was a great delicacy. At

practically all banquets and dinners, this item would come somewhere immediately after the main course. One is offered a leg of beef, a sharp knife, and some powdered chilly to go with it. The guest is expected to slice off a choice morsel from the chunk offered, dip in the chilly powder and consume it. Even at the Emperor's banquets, as one enters the huge banquet hall, one encounters hundreds of huge chunks of meat hooked to tall posts all along the banquet hall, covered with clean cloths, to keep away the flies. At the end of the main course waiters would move to the hundreds of posts, remove the cloth covers, and bring the huge chunks of raw meat to each table, with special knives and chilly powder. I managed consistently to keep away from this delicacy, for sentimental reasons rather than on account of principles. Since 1975 I do not eat meat at all. And I think I am all the more healthy for that. The Ethiopians, they say, invariably have tapeworms inside their body, because of their habit of eating raw meat.

Life with the Emperor

There was an endearing quality to Haile Sellassie. I felt drawn to him, and developed both affection and admiration for him. I discovered early that our ideas did not agree and settled for the fact that this would be a problem always.

He was a statesman and a strategist, but also a warm human being. He was quite abstemious, ate very little, and except for the occasional glass of champagne on a ceremonial occasion, did not drink very much alcohol.

He was very strict about his fasting and regular prayers and church worship. Especially during the Great Lent before Easter, when the Ethiopians fast for 56 days, he would not eat anything until three o'clock in the afternoon. He would be in his office, working. At three he would go to his private chapel, where there would be a special prayer service which lasted for an hour. Only after that he would break his fast.

Everyone stood in awe of him, including his own grown up sons and daughters, but not his wife, Empress Menen. She was the only

forthright critic he had, so long as she lived. Her death seems to have signaled the beginning of a period of decline in Haile Sellassie's life.

I always greeted him in the accepted Ethiopian way, even for his sons - to bow all the way down before him and to touch the ground every first time you greeted him in the day. The protocol for the eldest son, the Crown Prince was a little more strict. We only had to bow, bending double and touching the ground with our fingers. The Crown Prince had to fall down flat on the ground before the Emperor, touching the ground with his forehead, in a gesture of obeisance like the Indian *sashtangapranama*. This he had to do every first time in the day he saw his father. I felt sorry often for the Crown Prince who was several years senior to me. People said all kinds of things by way of explanation. One story was that the loyalty of the son to the father was always in doubt, and therefore that this was a stringent requirement laid down by the father to enforce submission and obedience.

Three members of his perpetual entourage were accredited to me. I could approach any of them any time with a message or memorandum for the Emperor, and they would immediately transmit it to him, in office or bedroom. They were also the ones whom the Emperor would send to call me into the presence. Of course you could access them only inside the Palace, or sometimes in our "Sunshine Club." This was a stretch of open tarmac between my office (Duke Beith) and the Emperor's Palace. Most of the ministers who came to see the Emperor on business practically every day, spent their time gossiping and waiting in this open court for the Emperor to call them. There was a waiting room inside the Palace. Apart from the Prime Minister, few of the other ministers would go into this room. They preferred to stand in the sunshine and wait. Since only the Emperor could make all the important decisions, most of the ministers wasted whole mornings in the "Sunshine Club." Sometimes the Emperor would not be able to call them at all, though he was quite businesslike and worked for long hours. It was the most inefficient way of running a government, but the Emperor would not readily hand over decision making authority to the ministers.

One day the Emperor was spending the week-end in one of his out of town palaces in Debre Zeit (Beshoftu), an hour's ride by car from Addis. He asked me to come along. During our stay there in that beautiful crater lake settlement, he asked me to come for a walk in his palace gardens. This was only a few months after I had started working in the Palace. As we walked back and forth, with no one within earshot, he enquired about how I was doing, and then said:

“I want your advice. I have a problem with one of my ministers. You know my Defence Minister, Ras Abebe Aregai. He is the richest person in the country. And yet, he is getting a kickback from the daily rations of every single soldier in the army. I have evidence for it now. What should I do?”

His Highness Ras Abebe Aregai was the leader of the Ethiopian Resistance to Mussolini's occupation of Ethiopia, a rough country soldier risen to prominence because of his skill in strategizing and taking risks. When the Emperor was in exile in Europe, Abebe was an outlaw in the jungles of Ethiopia, leader of the guerrilla resistance fighters, sought by the fascist troops of Mussolini, but protected and respected by his people for his courage and skill. When the Emperor regained his country with the help of his own emigre' troops and the Allied army, he honored Abebe Aregai with all kinds of land endowments and titles, until he rose to the highest possible title and rank in the country, Ras, equivalent to the Indian Rajah. He had been serving also as Defence Minister, at the head of one of the largest armies in Africa. I knew him, but did not think very highly of him, not because he was not very cultured, but since I was told by everyone that he was dishonest and corrupt. He was known to be fabulously rich, living in a palace of his own.

Without much hesitation, I gave the emperor my frank opinion:

“Your Majesty, Ras Abebe is known to the people as a very corrupt man. He is not very popular among them today, though he was the people's hero during the Resistance. On the other hand, Your Majesty's prestige among the people is very high, and they would admire you all the more if you punish a corrupt man for his misdeeds. Such exemplary punishment would be very good for the country, where

there is so much corruption and it is growing day by day, as I understand. Of course there should be an open trial, during which his crime and the evidence for it should be exposed.”

Haile Sellassie was silent for a few seconds, and then smiled at me, with a sad look in his eyes. “I was testing you. You are rather naive and politically inexperienced, as I expected. You know nothing about how a country is to be run. What would happen if I throw him down from his pinnacle? What I told you about him is true, and I have the evidence. But if I fire him, first, I would have a rich, cunning and very powerful enemy. Second, I will have to create another lord like him, for an Emperor needs these “buffers” between him and the people. I would have to endow such a lord with the wealth of the people. And when he gets sufficiently powerful, he will also become corrupt, like his predecessor. These things have to be handled differently, with skill and care. Statecraft is neither easy nor straightforward.”

Whatever was on the Emperor's mind I never found out. I was not convinced by his argument. Of course I had failed his test in statecraft. I knew I was too naive and not wily enough for politics. Only much later I understood how much damage could be done by people regarding themselves as honest at the head of public affairs. I readily think of the experience of Jimmy Carter and Rajiv Gandhi who set out to do honest politics. I had failed the test, but I did not feel sorry. I did not want to pass such tests.

The Emperor went on to talk about other things. We talked about religion and international affairs and many other subjects. I kept the discussion about the Defense Minister in my heart and brooded over it. These were state secrets and I could not discuss them with anyone.

The Defense Minister Comes to Me

A few days later my private telephone in the office rang. I picked it up.

“Good morning, my lord; the Defense Minister would like to talk to you”, said a gruff military voice over the telephone.

“Right away!” I promptly responded. The voice of Ras Abebe



Aregai came over the phone, without delay. It was smooth and polite, difficult to translate into English, but it went something like this:

“I have a petition to present to my lord. I want to come and see my lord. Kindly give me an appointment at a time convenient to my lord.”

In Amharic, addressing someone as “my lord” (*getaye*) is not unusual. It is more or less like ‘Sir’, but a little more courteous. “I have a petition to present to my lord” (*getaye gar gudday allenh*), is a courteous way of saying: “there is something I want you to do for me.” Still it was overly polite language for a senior minister to use to a junior member of the Emperor’s staff. If the Defense Minister wanted something from the Emperor, he would go directly to him, not through me. That was protocol and that was practice.

So I wondered what this call meant. I suspected something fishy, especially in the light of the Emperor’s conversation with me in Debre Zeit only a few days before. The only way the Defense minister could have known about that conversation was for the Emperor to have told him. Of course the Palace Mafia had bugged all the Emperor’s rooms and telephones, and the Emperor always suspected it; but we had our conversation precisely for that reason in the garden in Debre Zeit, that too walking.

“Your Highness, I should come to you. You do not need to come to me. I will come to your office or home. Just tell me when.” I was both courteous and deferential.

“No, no, I will come to your office at your convenience. Please tell me when I should come.” Ras Abebe insisted.

“Come right away, then, Your Highness. I will wait for you.”

“That is most kind of you. Thank you. I will be there in a few minutes.”

I had allowed at least half an hour for him to arrive and was planning to go to the entrance of our building to welcome him. He surprised me. He must have been calling from the Palace, I later guessed. In a few minutes he arrived, accompanied by the usual

entourage of generals and bodyguards, dismissed them at the entrance of the Duke Beith, and had walked in, alone, to the door of my office. I went to the door to welcome him, bowed politely, and guided him to my own office chair and asked him to sit on it, because it was the best chair around.

“Please do sit down, Your Highness”, I said, in as courteous an Amharic idiom as I knew, pointing to my office chair.

“By no means! That is my lord’s chair, and I cannot sit on it. I will sit on one of these.” He moved to take hold of one of the chairs on the opposite side of my desk. That was quite all right. I invited him again to sit on the seat he had chosen, myself now standing between the desk and my seat.

“My Lord has to sit down first”, he said.

“No, Your Highness is far senior to me, and must sit first before I can sit.” I said, mostly for the fun of a little parrying in the fencing game of counterfeit courtesy. Whatever the Defense Minister’s game was, I made up my mind not to give in so easily to his charms.

“My lord is more honorable. You must sit first. How can I sit, without your sitting?”

I was determined not to give in, at least in the game of politeness. So we kept on parrying, until finally I had to say:

“Your Highness, if you will not honor me by sitting down, then we have no option except to stand and talk.”

I had expected him to give in at that point and sit down, for we had both been standing now for a while. But not Ras Abebe Aregai! He was pitting his will against mine, and would not give in so easily:

“If that is the will of my lord, then we will stand and talk.”

So that is what we did. I stood between my office chair and desk, while he stood on the opposite side of the desk. I am always glad to have a desk between me and such people. Even between me and a class room or lecture audience which I fear may be slightly hostile. The desk is my defense.

"I came to see my Lord, because I need a little help." He began quite cautiously: "It is a little personal help I need, nothing official."

"But how can I, a poor newcomer, help someone like you, Your Highness?"

"My lord can help me. In fact you alone can help me."

"Please tell me how I can help Your Highness."

"You know how difficult it is for a minister to balance his domestic budget and make both ends meet. He has to give endless dinner parties and entertain lavishly. He has to live in grand style and maintain a large domestic staff, several cars, special clothes and so on. You know how meager a minister's salary is. He gets only a little more than what you, my lord, gets."

I was not quite getting the drift of the conversation. I had no way of guessing where it was all leading up to. Today I am slightly wiser and able to guess. But I was totally simple and naive in such matters, while being rather quick in the uptake of abstract ideas and philosophical notions. So I could do nothing but listen without interrupting. So His Highness Ras Abebe, whom the Emperor had called the richest man in Ethiopia, continued:

"So I have been trying to supplement my income by trying to build a couple of houses which I could give out on rent."

This time even I could see the hoax. It was common knowledge that Ras Abebe had some 500 houses in the city, and was getting more than a million dollars every year in house rent alone. He had enormous tracts of land in his possession, and was one of the largest of the landlords in the country - one reason why the people hated him. And he was talking to me, with a straight face, about "*trying to build a couple of houses*" and that too to "balance the domestic budget"! But I was not about to let out my indignation. I cannot lie with the same facility with which he could, but I was determined to see through to the end of the game. So I kept a straight face, normally a difficult thing for me to do. He continued:

"You know how expensive housing construction has become these

days. I am running out of money and cannot finish these houses. I need a loan, desperately.” He paused.

Just look at the irony of it! The richest man in Ethiopia talking to a poor Indian who does not even have a whole thousand dollars to his credit in the bank, about a loan! I was in fact flabbergasted, and wanted to ask: “What is this game, Your Highness? Out with it.” Instead I politely responded:

“But what can I do about that, Your Highness?”

“Oh, you can indeed help me. In fact, you are the only one who can help me. That is why I came to you.”

My logical capacity, my understanding of sense and sequence, of reason and reasonableness, my ability to follow a conversation, was being unkindly stretched. Certainly he is not going to ask me to intercede with the Emperor to give him a loan! He should be smart enough to know what the Emperor thinks of him!

“But how can I help, Your Highness?”, I blurted out, not without a tinge of irritation. We were still standing.

“Let me tell you. The only source from which I can get a loan is the bank, the State Bank of Ethiopia. You know the manager of the Bank. He is your friend and fellow countryman, Mr. Menezes. If you put in a word for me, he will grant me a loan.”

Of course, there was only one bank in Ethiopia then, and that was the government bank. Mr. Menezes was a Goan, and we all knew that he was right at the center of all the corruption in the country. I knew him well, though I would have hardly called him a friend. He gave loans to all the corrupt landlords and profiteering traders in the country, and got a kick back from each of them. He was a close collaborator of the Defense Minister himself in the latter’s housing construction and other projects.

“Oh, Mr. Menezes”, I said: “He will do anything Your Highness asks him to do. It is better that Your Highness speaks to him directly, now. Shall I call him?” I made a move towards the telephone by my side.

“No, don’t. Don’t call him now. He has given me loans in the past,

but don't call him now. After I am gone, you can call him, and recommend a loan for me.”

I had no idea where the trap was, but I knew it was some kind of a trap. I was not going to fall into it. So, I said, very gently and very firmly,

“No, Your Highness, I will not be able to help you. I will not ask Mr. Menezes to give you a loan. You can ask him directly and he will give you what you ask. I have no doubt about that. But I do not want to be involved.”

It was firm and final. He saw it, and said, very modestly, “If you will not help me, I will have to go somewhere else for help. Thank you for your time. Pardon me for having bothered you.” He bowed and put forth his hand to shake my hand and say goodbye. I saw him to the door, and was going to accompany him to the outer entrance, but he would not let me. His entourage was waiting outside.

I came back to my desk, sat down and prayed. I thanked God for not letting me fall into whatever trap there was. I did not know whether the Defense Minister was going to be my enemy from this time forth. I did not worry too much about that. I reflected, seeking to make sense of this call.

I could not see the point. I decided to seek some advice, very discreetly. There was only one man among the senior ministers whom I fully trusted. He was a Tigre from the North, Ato Abebe Retta, Minister of Health. He was known not to be corrupt. So I phoned him and said I wanted to see him. He asked me to come right away. He was several years my senior in age, very honest and forthright, and rather fond of me. I could not share with him my conversation with the Emperor about the Defense Minister, because that was a state secret. But I narrated to him in detail the visit of the Defense Minister to my office.

He listened very carefully, reflected for a minute and then said to me:

“What you did was absolutely right. I have no way of knowing what the Defense Minister's real intention was. I can only make a



guess. You probably know that there is a group of nine or so top people who have woven a closed circle around the Emperor. No information gets to the Emperor without their knowledge, and what they do not want the Emperor to know, does not get through. Now the Emperor has foxed them by bringing you. You have broken through their circle. They would like to co-opt you into their circle. You have the unusual freedom of bringing anything to the notice of the Emperor, a freedom which I do not have as a senior Minister. They resent that.”

“But how do they co-opt me, by making me ask Menezes for a loan for Ras Abebe?” I asked.

“Again, I can only guess”, said the Health Minister. “Suppose for a moment that you fell into the trap and asked Menezes to help Ras Abebe with a loan. Menezes has been giving loans to Ras Abebe ever since the bank started, and you will never know what transpires between them. But I can guess what Menezes will say to you, something like: ‘Oh, Ras Abebe! I won’t give him a loan. I have given him many loans in the past and he is very remiss about timely repayment. But since this is the first time that you ask me for a favor, let me see what I can do.’ That is all he will say. You will never even know whether Ras Abebe got a fresh loan or whether he needed such a loan. But one day when Ras Abebe sees you in the Sunshine Club or somewhere else, he will invite you to lunch or dinner in his house. You will have a sumptuous dinner. The guests will be carefully chosen that they can be future witnesses to what goes on at the dinner. Probably there will be a secret movie camera (video cameras did not exist in those days) and a secret tape recorder operating all the time. Towards the end of the dinner, the Defense Minister will say to you something like: ‘Oh, I cannot thank you enough for coming to my rescue in what was a difficult financial situation for me. If you had not helped me, I would not have known where to turn. I would like to express my gratitude by this little token.’ He would hand you a little envelope with some money in it, and it will all be recorded, with eye-witnesses. You would then have received your own kick-back, and then you are part of their circle, because they can use the evidence against you any time.”

Today I know that this sort of game is commonplace for political operators in India as well as elsewhere. But at that time I was totally inexperienced and unsophisticated in such matters. The explanation of Ato Abebe Retta completely convinced me about the power group around the Emperor, most of whom I could identify. For example, the Prime Minister (son-in-law of the Emperor), the Defense Minister, the Interior Minister, the Finance Minister, the Minister of the Pen, and the Holder of the Imperial Purse, who happened to be a priest were at the top of the ring of corruption.

I became aware that I was unsuited to power jobs in any government. I knew that I would not always succeed in resisting the blandishments of money and power. One thing the Defense Minister said was true. It was becoming difficult for me to balance my own budget, because of the frequent demands on outlays for clothing, cars, salaries of domestic servants, entertainment of guests, parties, donations and so on. It was easy to accept a little gift voluntarily offered by people who had benefited from one's services. That is the way it all begins. From then on it is all a downhill spiral.

I could probably learn the tricks of the power game fairly quickly. But in that process I would have lost something I regarded as very valuable in myself. Not that I am scrupulously honest or anything like that. Yet one has no desire to be like many government officials in India, both high and low, who seem today to have no compunction about accepting bribes large and small from all and sundry.

I went home, prayed reflected. I decided that this way of life was not for me. I carefully prepared a resignation letter and submitted it to the Emperor. I did not mention all my reasons. I simply stated that I would like to go back to India and start serving my people, ordinary people.

A few days later the Emperor called me to his office. He talked to me with great affection. He said he needed me and that it was difficult to find honest people to work for him. He talked to me about several new responsibilities he wanted me to take up. One was the Charitable Foundation (*Baggo Adragot*) which he had set up with his own personal money to serve the deserving poor people. The other was

to advise the Ministry of Education. A third was to be Executive Secretary to the Ethiopian Government Committee for Relief Aid given by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Aid for victims of the last war. Honestly I did not have the heart to refuse. I expected there would be some opportunity for real service to people in these new assignments. A few days later I got the orders appointing me as Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Advisor to the Haile Sellassie I Charitable Foundation, and Executive Secretary of the UNRRA Committee.

As time went on, I discovered that these jobs were largely decorative. I went to many committee meetings, studied many projects and proposals and gave advice on them. But very little of my advice was actually put into practice. I had no executive power in either the Ministry of Education or the Charitable Foundation. The Ethiopians in charge, Ato Kebede Michael and Ato Tafari Sharo, resented my meddling, and while being polite to me, held me at bay from any real authority. The UNRRA job was routine, and was slowly winding up as UN Funds gradually dried up. Vested interests were regnant everywhere, and I am not the kind that would fight for my own power, or try to overthrow other people from power in order to establish my own. I could have fought with some hope of success, since the Emperor was on my side. But I avoided any major power struggle, since my mind was set on getting out of the power game.

I was popular in Ethiopia, knew all the important people, and had genuine affection and respect for the Emperor. Still I was terribly lonely, unhappy and spiritually restless. There was no friend with whom I could share my feelings and who would understand. As a layman, I got to know the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Baselios, a pious monk of the old school, who was however very fond of me. With Abuna Theophilos, the powerful prelate who had scolded me and admonished me against leaving Ethiopia the first time, I was on very close and friendly terms. Though he spoke no English, he was very learned in the traditional lore of Ethiopia, and I learned much from him.

Among the Indians, I had few friends. I went to the home of Mr.



John Barnabas for an occasional game of bridge. I visited Mr. Balachandran Nair, the Community Development Advisor, who was in Ethiopia on a short one-year assignment. There was Mr. Varghese, the Legal Advisor in the Ministry of Law, whose wife was a distant cousin of mine. I visited the homes of the Indian teachers, but only rarely. The important thing in all these families was that they all had young children, and I was always immensely fond of children. Children were a green spot in my life. Their company made me forget my woes, at least for the time being.

But I was unhappy, and did not share my unhappiness with anyone. I prayed about it. One particular occasion, I remember the dialogue with God was particularly meaningful. I kept saying to God, in my usual petulant manner:

“What have you done to me, my God? I was so spiritually aglow, happy and useful, in India. You have to admit that several people came to know you better because of my work. I did not want to go away from India. Why did you drag me away from such a useful ministry, to this drab spiritual desert, where I am wasting my time?”

Quite often, God engages me in a long silence, when I ask a stupid question like that. He usually wants me to answer my own question. He wants me to struggle with myself in silent meditation and come out with an answer. If the answer is not good, He draws me into another silence, till I come out with a better answer. This time the right answer came the very first time, and it came from Him this time, in a very gentle, slightly mocking, but friendly word: “Well, my son, do you think I could have been trying to make you see that I could perhaps not be totally helpless without your help there in India?”

That hit me. I understood. In India I was in danger of thinking too highly of myself and my spiritual achievements and of my indispensability to God, that it could have led me into disastrous spiritual pride. Pride of every kind comes rather naturally to me, but spiritual pride is the worst, and most spiritually destructive. I have seen many of our Hindu and Christian holy men fall prey to spiritual pride, primarily because their spiritual attainments did not render them immune to addiction to praise and admiration for themselves. I thanked God for

having rescued me from a great spiritual danger in India, and agreed not to question His judgment about what was good for me. Ethiopia was where He had brought me, and in Ethiopia I must stay until I get my next marching orders.

CHAPTER V

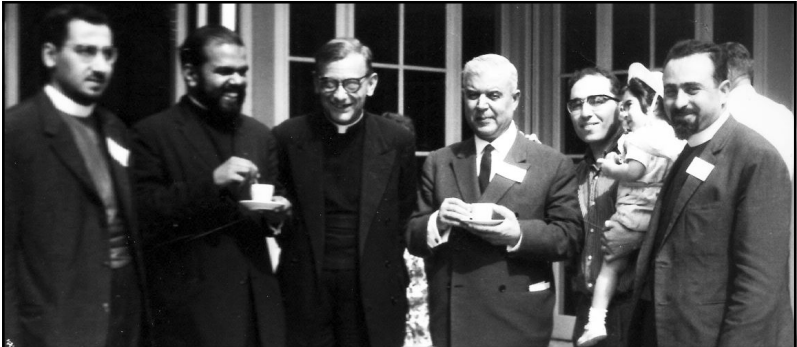
ETHIOPIA II

The Orthodox Student Association

If I could not leave Ethiopia, and if government work was not interesting to me, I could only increase the scope of my religious work. I was already teaching in several of the colleges in Addis Ababa. With the Emperor's permission, and the approval of my students, we began organising the *Haimanote Abew* Orthodox Student Organisation. Many people helped me in the task, but the students did not want to close association with the official church. I remember I took about 100 college students to a one day retreat in the private chapel of the palace of the former Prime Minister, Bitwoded (later Ras) Makonnen Endalkachew, a senior aristocrat for whom I had the highest regard. The Rev. Abba Habtemariam, the young Ethiopian monk who had several years before helped me at the Kotabe Secondary School, now joined hands with me.

In those days, Ethiopians took communion only when they were small children or after they became very old. The idea was that so long as one's sexual powers were operative, one was a sinner and should not take communion. It took me a great deal of persuasion and effort to make my students see that this was not a Christian assumption, that there was forgiveness available for every human being in Christ, and that frequent communion was the norm for a true practising Christian. Several students partook of Communion during that one day retreat at the palace of the former Prime Minister, beautifully situated on a wooded hill. A deep bond was formed among all of us, and that was the beginning of the *Haimanote Abew* (means The Faith of our Fathers). We then organized several study classes and conferences, and this work gave me a lot of satisfaction and occasion for praising God.

My weekly classes at the University College of Addis Ababa two evenings a week and at the Mahandis Engineering College once a week gave me a great deal of spiritual satisfaction, and seemed to be useful to the young university students. There was no obligation to



attend, but 50 to 100 students came regularly. We had also occasional retreats and conferences, which often meant much to the young people. But it was rather difficult for them to relate to the regular Ethiopian Orthodox clergy and worship, both of which belonged to an antiquated, uncritical, feudal framework from which the young university student had been significantly alienated.

When I finally left Ethiopia in 1959, this work with university students, which was entirely voluntary on my part and which formed no part of my official responsibilities, was the most painful for me to leave behind. The *Haimanote Abew* organisation itself became even more active after I left. But there was one significant change. The movement, without losing its religious foundations, became increasingly politically aware, which meant necessarily critical of the Haile Sellassie regime and policy.

On the one hand, the Communist ideology had already spread among the university student body, even though the Emperor had taken care to see that the university was run by anticommunist Jesuits from French Canadian universities. Some of the professors were East European refugees for whom fighting communism was virtually their creed: Communist ideas had been coming in from many sources, only one of which was the local Soviet Embassy. Several of the young Ethiopians who had gone abroad to study came back with a frame of mind that could not accept the corrupt social and economic structure that prevailed in a basically feudal Ethiopia.

(Incomplete)

CHAPTER VI
AMERICA AND THE WEST

(Not Written)

CHAPTER VII
THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT
ROME, CONSTANTINOPLE, GENEVA,
AND THE REST OF US

(Not Written)

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOVIET UNION THAT WAS COMMUNISM, SOCIALISM, LIBERALISM AND OTHER ISMS

April 1993. I am here in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates for the Holy Week celebrations. On the Friday before Palm Sunday, I celebrated the Eucharistic liturgy in our St. George Orthodox Church, Abu Dhabi, and on Palm Sunday, at St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Dubai. In both these places it was my special privilege to oversee the construction, in the last few years, of two beautiful new churches. This is exceptional because the Emirs and Sheikhs do not normally allow the construction of any places of worship other than Islamic mosques. As a favour to the communities of Indian Orthodox Christians, the Sheikhs of Abu Dhabi and Dubai long ago permitted us to build churches of our own. In Islamic countries, unlike in socialist and liberal countries, religions other than Islam enjoy no equal privileges with Muslims or any full freedom of worship. So we are very grateful to the Emirs and Sheikhs for this special concession to us in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

In Sharjah also we have sizeable Orthodox congregation; they have no place of worship of their own; they share a prayer hall with nine other denominations, and it is often difficult to maintain the atmosphere necessary for Eastern Orthodox worship in such common places, where other Christians have different attitudes about how a place of worship should look and be maintained. Our people want to construct a church of their own, but it is very difficult to get permission from the Sheikh and from the Waqaf or Islamic Affairs Board.

So I went to seek the advice of my long-time friend Sheikh Dr. Ibrahim Ezzeddin, Advisor on Religious Affairs to the President of the Emirates. Dr. Ibrahim Ezzeddin is a distinguished, scholarly, intelligent and devout Egyptian Muslim, for whom I have both great affection and high admiration.

We had met for the first time, years ago, in Moscow, at the first

major inter-religious conference held in the Soviet Union: "Religious Workers, to Save the Precious Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe." Dr. Ezzeddin was the leader of the large Islamic delegation of more than 200 members from a dozen or more countries. There were more than a thousand people from all the religions of the world attending. I was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, with the responsibility to bring out half a dozen documents acceptable to all religions and all political opinions to the left of centre. Sheikh Ibrahim Ezzeddin was the leader and spokesman for the whole Muslim delegation, since he spoke perfect English and was widely acceptable to Muslims who disagreed among themselves.

Chairing the Drafting Committee, I remember, was a difficult task for three reasons. First, the process of communication in the committee was so convoluted. Some Muslim Sheikh from, say, Afghanistan, would make a point in a session of the drafting committee, in his special kind of Arabic. An interpreter would render it from Arabic to Russian. From the Russian another interpreter would translate it into English. The chairman of the drafting committee could never be sure whether what the Afghan said, as it got through two interpreters, was rightly understood by him or by the committee, or whether the committee's response was properly conveyed to the Afghan.

Secondly, since the conference theme was averting nuclear catastrophe, quite often there were differences of opinion between not only Soviet and Western participants, but also among Nuclear and non-Nuclear nations. It was difficult to find an easily acceptable common formulation.

Thirdly, there was always somebody at the back of the Chairman, whispering in his ears what should be said, that is, some people wanting us to repeat in our document the official Soviet government line. That line was most of the time decidedly progressive (for example, for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons from the face of the earth), but in some particular cases politically unacceptable to certain nations.

We had produced a draft on Peace in the Middle East, more or less along the lines of UN resolutions on the subject. This did not

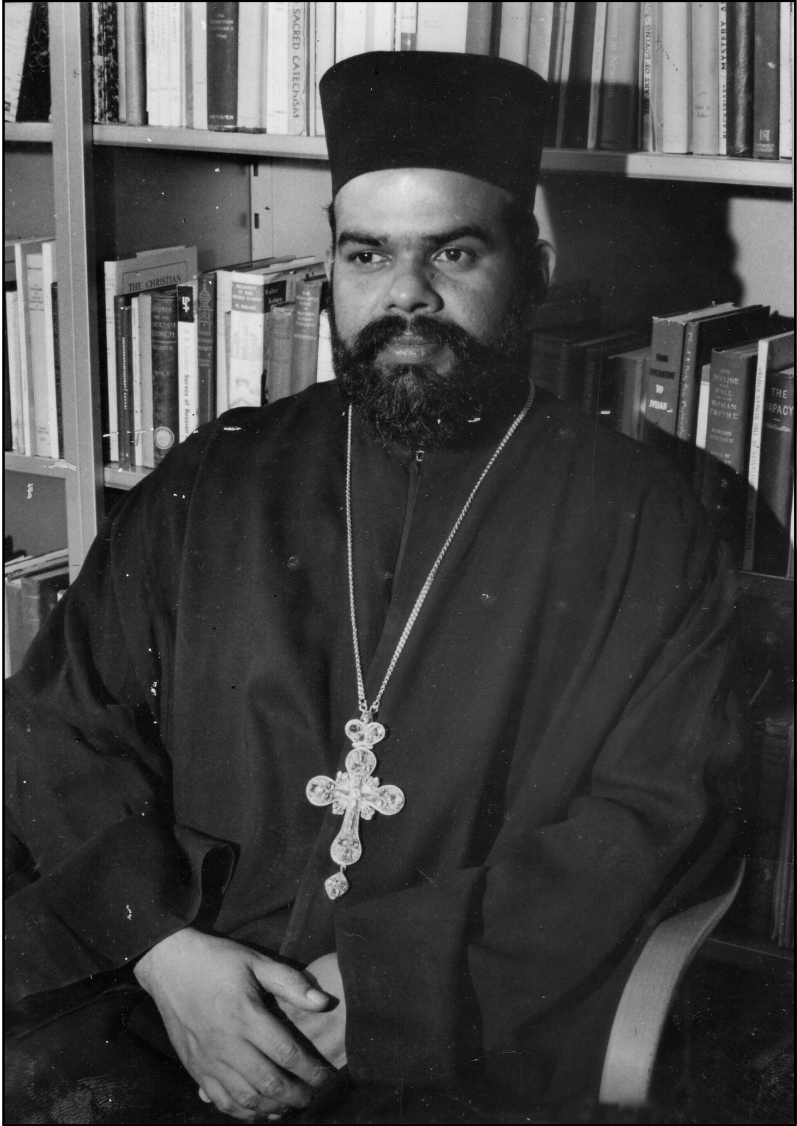
fully agree with some extreme Arab views, and some Muslims went to Metropolitan Juvenaly of the Russian Orthodox Church and protested. Juvenaly skillfully directed the dissenting Muslim leaders to the Chairman of the Drafting Committee. They came to me in a huff, showed me their draft, and said that if it was not accepted by the conference, the entire Muslim delegation was walking out of the conference. Sheikh Ibrahim was one of the people who came to see me to give the ultimatum. Mine was a difficult situation indeed. If I accepted their formulation, many of the western delegations would object and protest. I had tried to be fair and objective in producing our version, which had asked for the implementation of the relevant UN Resolutions on the subject. I prayed and said to the Muslim leaders, calmly:

“Gentlemen, I am not used to negotiating anything under a threat. If you will give me your reasons why you object to our draft, I am quite prepared to propose some suitable amendments to the drafting committee. But if you threaten me with a walkout, I have nothing to say.”

That calmed down the Muslim leaders. Dr. Ibrahim apologized for having threatened to walk out, and then we sat down and explained things to each other. I had to accept one or two verbal changes in our draft, but no substantial change. The amended draft was accepted by the conference, and from that time on Dr. Ibrahim became my friend.

I had paid several visits to Dr. Ibrahim Ezzeddin during my later visits to Abu Dhabi, which was part of Delhi Diocese. He was always Presidential Advisor to the Ruler of UAE. He also served as Vice-Chancellor of the newly established AI Ain University in UAE. He always received me with great honour and affection, and often introduced me to his friends as one who is fit to be the Prime Minister of India.

So this time (in 1993) when I phoned him, he readily agreed to see me; he even made it convenient for us to meet in his private apartment in town, so that I did not have to go through the security and protocol problems for seeing him at the Presidential Palace where he lived and worked.



Asked for advice on applying for a plot of land and permission to build a church in Sharjah, and another in Al-Ain, he said to me:

“You know Bishop, just this week, the British High Commissioner came to me with a similar request. The Anglicans want to build a church in Al-Ain. I will tell you exactly what I told him. We have, in the Arab countries, two different schools of thought. One group, more conservative, thinks that the whole Arabian peninsula is sacred land, and that it should not be polluted by the construction of any non-Muslim places of worship in the entire peninsula. They would not let any non-Muslim groups to practice collective worship in a country like Saudi Arabia. We have also people who think like the Saudis. Then there is another group, also faithful to Islam, but not so conservative, who think that a place of Christian worship in a Muslim land is not against the command of the Prophet - blessings be upon him - but such places would not be obtrusive and showy, causing affront to the sensitivities of Muslims. The Sheikhs in the Emirates have been of the latter point of view in the past, and that is why your community has now two churches in our country. But the trend today is in the direction of the first position. It is up to the individual Sheikh to make a decision about a Christian church in his territory; though he would normally consult other sheikhs before giving such permission. That is what I said to the British High Commissioner, and that is all that I can say to you, Bishop.”

We discussed the matter a little further, and then he asked me if he could put two questions to me in a very personal and private way, just for his own understanding. I readily agreed. His first question was about Muslim - Christian dialogue. We will deal with that question in the context of discussing inter-religious relations. His second question forms the theme of this chapter.

“Bishop, I hope you do not mind my asking a very personal question. I hope I am not being nosy. I have learned to respect you, and I thought it was best to put the question to you directly than to depend on hearsay. I have heard many people refer to you as ‘a pink bishop’, not quite ‘red’, but close to it. Mind you, I myself have socialist ideas, but I would like to hear you characterise your own ideas in respect of socialism.”

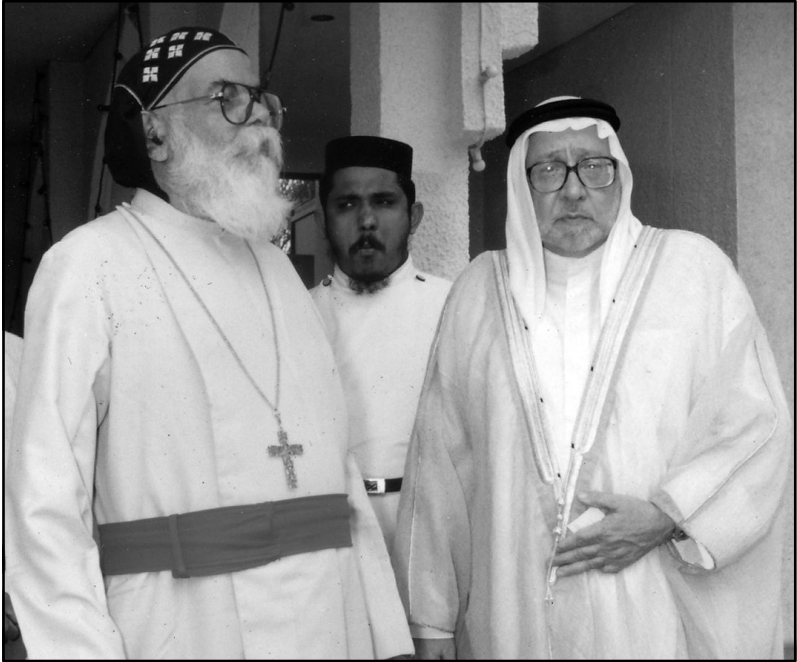
“Well, Sheikh saheb”, I began, using an Indian way of friendly accosting which is both respectful and affectionate, but which he may or may not have appreciated, “I have been called a “Red Bishop”, both in India and abroad, parallel to the somewhat pejorative appellation “Red Dean of Canterbury” often applied, more justifiably, to Dean Hewlett Johnson in an earlier generation, but this is the first time I hear the epithet ‘Pink Bishop.’ I have a qualified commitment to Socialism, if that is what people mean, even after the collapse, beginning in 1989, of one form of socialism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. That is a commitment to ideals like social justice for all, the dignity of all human beings, the unity of the human race, peace among nations and peoples, and a healthy and life-promoting environment. It is not, however a commitment to any particular form of the socialist ideology which has arisen in post-Enlightenment western civilisation. I am not committed to particular doctrines like the Class Struggle as the single framework for understanding all social development, state ownership of the means of production, or the dictatorship of the proletariat. I do not subscribe to fundamental ideologies like dialectical materialism or historical materialism. Nor am I committed to any form of western idealism. I remain a committed Christian, and every other commitment is within that framework only.”

The Sheikh listened patiently and with nods of approval. He was by no means fanatically anti-Christian:

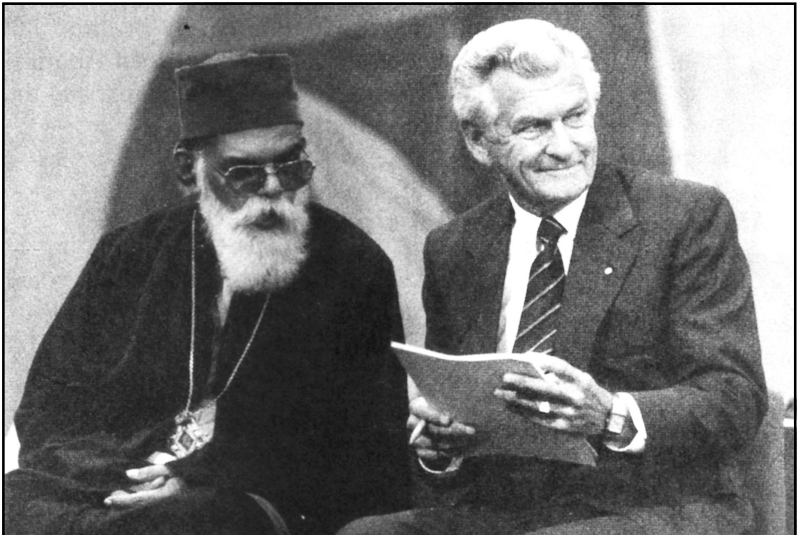
“I am very glad to hear your statement. I have often wondered how a religious person can also be a socialist in the ideological sense. I have always thought of you as a religious person and I have wanted to ask you how you reconcile your religious views with the views of the Communists. I would like to hear you at greater length on that subject on some other occasion.”

Well, that is what I shall try to do in this chapter, and to speak of my association with the Communists. I must go on to speak also of secularism and western liberalism in the same process. I am not seeking to justify myself, but only trying to clarify my own views as they now stand.

I come from the Indian state of Kerala, where the Communist



Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios with Dr. Ibrahim Ezzeddin



With Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke (1991)

parties have been very active since 1940's and have held the reins of state government several times. About 35% of Kerala votes usually go to the Communists, and if the remaining 65% is sufficiently divided, or if one of the major non-Communist parties ally themselves with the Communists, the latter can always win. They do not have to use undemocratic methods to come to power.

Until I left India for the first time in 1947, I had only the usual journalistic contacts with the Communists. Even my trade union activities were under organisations related to the Indian National Congress. In the years from 1954-56 when I was in India again, I generally kept out of active politics. It was only after I came back to India from Geneva in 1967 that I devoted myself to Indian politics as such and came in contact with Indian communists. On that later.

As far as international communism is concerned, my contacts with the Soviet Union began in 1962, when I led the second official delegation of the World Council of Churches to the member churches in the USSR. It was a distinguished delegation of 7 members of the WCC executive staff. As Associate General Secretary of the WCC, the mantle of leadership fell on me, though I was quite inexperienced compared to most of my fellow delegates. There was Prof. Z. K. Mathews, a senior and well known South African Black, the Africa Secretary of the WCC, Dr. Paul Abrecht of USA, Director of the Department of Church and Society who had been with the WCC since its inception in 1948, the Rev. Victor Hayward of England from the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Mr. Dominique Michaeli of Switzerland from the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, Dr. John Taylor of USA from the Department of Information, and Dr. Mauricio Lopez of South America who later became President of a University in Argentina and died a cruel martyr's death in the heroic struggle against oppression and exploitation in his country.

As we set out from Geneva there was a lot of expectation and excitement. The Iron Curtain was just beginning to lift, and all of us, particularly westerners, were eager to have a peep behind. We had been fully briefed by knowledgeable western Kremlin-watchers whom



to trust and whom not to. They told us that our interpreters would always be KGB agents whose job would be to report our conversations, contacts, and activities to their bosses.

And we were given a 'sacred' secret mission by the Protestants - to smuggle in 24 Russian Bibles supplied by the United Bible Societies. I was given the name of one Prof. Alexander Mirkasimov, a Russian who had once migrated to America, but now given up his American citizenship after a dozen or more years of holding it, and become a Soviet citizen again. He was working at the Department of External Church Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church. I was to discretely hand over the 24 Bibles to Prof. Mirkasimov, without anyone else seeing me give it. I put 12 Bibles in my own suitcase, and the remaining twelve were distributed to my six colleagues, each one carrying two Russian Bibles in his bag.

We had been told that we would be received in Moscow airport as VIPs and that our baggage would not be examined by customs. Contrary to our expectations, our plane made an intermediate stop in Kiev on its route from Geneva to Moscow. This being our first stop in the Soviet Union, our baggage, we were told in Kiev, would have to go through customs. The customs officials were very polite. I was in my priest's garments - black cassock and flowing black gown over it, and a glittering Archimandrite's cross on my neck. My suitcase was not opened in Kiev or Moscow. But each of my colleagues' suitcases were gently opened, and they took out the two Bibles from each suitcase. They did not even examine the rest of the contents of the suitcase. They obviously knew exactly what they were looking for. Today I know that there was always an agent of the KGB in the WCC office and that the information would have been carried to the customs officials ahead of our arrival, that we were carrying 24 Bibles. I thought I was specially privileged that the 12 bibles in my bag were not taken. The customs men told my colleagues politely that it was forbidden to carry Bibles into the Soviet Union, and that their Bibles could be returned to them on their leaving the country.

When we got to Moscow we were given a very warm official welcome. On a suitable occasion I quietly and clandestinely handed

over 12 Bibles to Mr. Mirkasimov as I had been instructed. I had a great sense of one mission accomplished successfully.

The rest of the trip went along quite well. I had an exposure to many aspects of the Soviet system. We were always lavishly entertained. Our information from the West was that Soviet citizens did not get enough to eat, especially of meat and vegetables. At our own meals we experienced no shortages, except perhaps that we could not get milk for our tea. Wine flowed at every meal, and even at breakfast there was an abundant supply of cognac and vodka, meat, fish, vegetables, smoked ham, salads of different kinds, bread, butter, cheese and eggs, tea, coffee, and lemonades in many colours and flavours. It did not take us long to surmise that this was not the lot of the ordinary Soviet citizen in his own home. There were shortages, mainly of meat and milk goods, but the Soviet citizen was getting enough to eat.

I was impressed by certain positive features. As far as I could find out, there was full employment; no one with the ability to work was without a job. All had some place to live, not much space perhaps, but none were homeless or on the streets. And rents, subsidized by the state, were very very low. Health care and education were practically free for all. Clothing, though not classy or fashionable, was not expensive. Children and their needs received special attention. Transportation was cheap, whether by Metro or bus, by air or rail, for Soviet citizens. High quality entertainment, whether opera, symphony, ballet, circus or puppet theatre was always available in the large cities at moderate prices. Athletics and Sports were areas in which the Soviets excelled. There was very little crime, at least in those days. The streets, even in the large cities, were safe at night. Holidays, even in classy hotels, were cheap by any standards, though the domestic rates were not available to foreign tourists. Essentials of life, like goods in the shops when available, were always very reasonably priced - whether food items or domestic utensils, phonograph records, stationery, books, souvenirs and so on. I kept saying to myself: "Oh, when would my country and the whole Two-third World reach this level of development!"

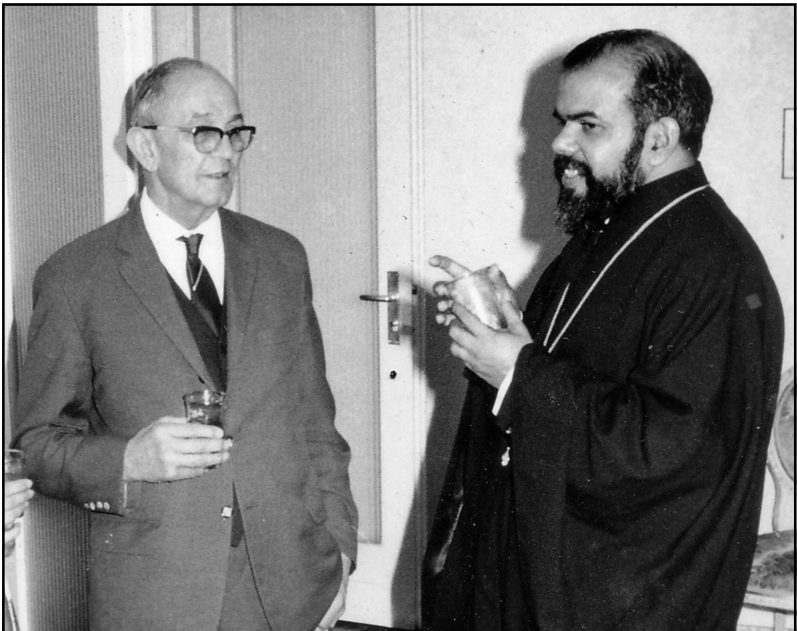
On the negative side, we saw that people lacked the individual freedoms so highly regarded in the West, like freedom of protest and dissent, freedom of the press, freedom of religious propagation, freedom of criticising the government, and freedom of association. There certainly was no freedom to accumulate wealth beyond a certain point, no freedom for one family to own several houses and lands; no freedom to travel abroad when you liked; no freedom to own several cars or sometimes even one; no freedom for much luxurious living and consumption, except an occasional party with a lot of alcohol. I remember the occasion when the Leningrad Theological Academy, where I had been nominated an honorary lecturer, first gave me an honorarium of 1200 rubles (in those days it was the equivalent of US \$ 1800), I could not find ways of spending that money usefully. Sometimes one bought a watch or a camera or a pair of opera glasses for someone back home, but the quality and variety of luxury goods always left a great deal to be desired. I have often wondered why the Soviets who have magnificent achievements to their credit in space technology and war technology, always remained so low grade in the quality of most of their consumer goods. Was it pure inefficiency and corruption, or was there an element of intentional asceticism which looked down upon quality goods? First I thought it was a case of social asceticism. If that were really the case, the system could hardly have caved in, as it later did, by the deadweight of consumerism.

There was little room for individual creativity or freedom in the arts. Thought itself, as well as literature and art, was entirely bound by conformism, enslaved by the establishment. There was too much spying on each other and punishment without trial. One heard about the inhuman methods of the KGB. The misuse of privilege by those in the upper reaches of the power scheme, the unforgivable ways in which the state handled intellectual dissent, and the violation of many basic human rights. Religion was persecuted, attacked and officially ridiculed, not only at great cost to the State, but also at the expense of truth and justice.

There was religious freedom within certain limits. State law technically allowed freedom of worship, but not of imparting religious instruction to children or adults (except the Sunday morning sermons



Visit of U Thant (UN general secretary) to the WCC, 1966. Left to right: Dr W. A. Visser't Hooft, U Thant, Dr. Elfan Rees, O. Frederick Nolde, Fr. Paul Varghese



or in the class rooms of the priest's training centres), or of propagating one's religious convictions to members of one's own family. The Russian Orthodox Church was allowed more freedom than other Christians, Muslims, Buddhists or Jews in the Soviet Union.

It was around 1942 that the privileged position of the Russian Orthodox Church became established, twenty five years after it had been banished from public life by the Bolsheviks. It is curious that this coming back of the Orthodox Church into the center of Soviet life should happen in the time of Josef Stalin, one of the most oppressive dictators history has seen.

In 1942, as Hitler's armies were already approaching Leningrad, Stalin saw that Soviet resistance to Hitler would take more than the simple admonitions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the Soviet people.

COMPLETE THE STORY AFTER STALIN, KHRUSHCHEV, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. DISCUSS ALSO RELATIONS WITH WORLD PEACE COUNCIL AND THE ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE IN EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. DEAL WITH CPC, BEGINNING WITH 1960 AND POST WCC ASSOCIATION AS VICE-PRESIDENT.

GO BACK TO DISCUSSION OF THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM. USE NOTES IN DELHI. DESCRIBE HOW THE "END OF HISTORY" WAS ENGINEERED.

(Incomplete)

APPENDIX: 1

AT THE STROKE OF A STROKE...

(Journal - June 5, 1993)

Exactly a week ago, I set out for the Symposium on the Foundations of Theoretical Physics at the Institute of High Energy Physics in the University of Cologne, June 1 to 5, 1993. This was something I had very much looked forward to, but it was not to be, like on many previous occasions when I was about to play a significant role in an international event, the Lord willed that it was not to be. On my way from Oxford to Cologne, a mild stroke paralysed my left side. I did not realise until much later that it was a stroke. This is the eighth day after I was admitted in the emergency clinic of Krankenhaus Sankt Josef in Wuppertal Elberfeld, and was in the intensive care section for twentyfour hours, since the doctors suspected a coronary thrombosis. The doctors are sure, from examining my ECG, that I had a heart lesion quite some years ago. I have no memory of it, nor have any of the Indian cardiologists who had examined my ECG in the past ever told me of such a lesion. The doctor here, a very good, kind and obviously competent man, with very competent colleagues and quite sophisticated diagnostic equipment, tells me that the lesion in the heart wall may have caused some blood coagulation inside the heart, and some of the coagulated blood particles may have conveyed by the circulatory system into the blood vessels of the brain, causing capillary rupture or microembolism in the right hemisphere of the brain. They have looked for the scar of the heart lesion with their very sophisticated cardioscope, but evidently they could not spot anything. They will do some more tests. For the moment, I am able to sit up (with a lot of help - by myself I am still pretty helpless in one half of my body) and operate my Notebook computer with one hand.

God has been immensely good to me. Even in London's Heathrow airport, I found it difficult to carry my hand baggage from the Oxford-Heathrow bus to the check-in counter or away from it. If a kind lady, a total stranger, had not helped me with the luggage, I would have found it difficult to check in at all. I was getting very weary, dragging my left side which was already going limp, while leaning on and



pushing a luggage cart with my hand baggage - the computer, my walking stick I acquired the previous day, and a light briefcase with my money and valuables - along the vast tracts of passageways from check-in and immigration control to the boarding gate, at least a mile in this case. I had gone half the distance to the boarding gate when I saw an elderly airlines staff person taking a wheelchair. I told him that I need a wheelchair for myself if I were to get to the plane. I did not expect him to take me seriously. It was my fault that I was too diffident at the time of check in to ask for a wheelchair for myself. The man saw the rather pathetic look on my face and asked which gate I wanted to get to. My voice was very weak and I told him: "gate six." He had heard me wrong and asked me: "eighty six? Where is that?" I told him, "six." He said, "I am not going there, but I will take you there all the same." He was most kind. I got through the remaining half mile without much effort, and boarded the Lufthansa flight for Cologne.

I thanked God not only for all the help I had received, but also for the fact that ordinary people in the west were still so kind, considerate and helpful to the disabled.

My knowledge of the physical sciences, theoretical or practical, is deplorably low, never having studied physics, chemistry or biology beyond a very elementary level, such as was available in Indian schools sixty years ago. Even in my heroic efforts in the past thirty years or so, I have not managed to grasp the two great aspects of the advancement of modern science - namely the Theory of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics - which have in our century made classical Newtonian mechanics no longer acceptable as the foundation for seeing reality 'as it is.' It is true that even today many people, including a number of practising scientists take the naive realism view of reality, which holds that things are what they look like. Ever since Immanuel Kant established for the West the great insight that human reason can perceive reality only as shaped and imprinted by the given structure of the perceiving mind, naive realism should have gone out of fashion in the west. The whole struggle of modern scientific research is to unravel the hiddenness of things, for things certainly appear to be something else than what they appear to be on the

surface. The phenomena or *phainomena* which in Greek means “those things which appear or shine forth” are themselves hidden and have to be coaxed out into appearance. Who could have guessed even eighty years ago that there actually existed phenomena to be identified and baptized later on (in some cases baptized even before being experimentally identified!) as baryons and leptons, mesons and pions, nucleons and neutrinos, muons and finally, six quarks which constitute hadrons or mesons and baryons of different kinds? The Quantal Realm alone has brought forth so many new phenomena which help explain, at least in part, why matter-energy behaves the way it does. Similar giant strides have been made in astrophysics and biochemistry.

Our understanding of time has changed in so many respects: e.g. its irreversibility and unidirectionality, stochastic (trial and error) processes in biological morphogenesis pointing to purposive or teleological causation in physical and biological evolution, the theoretical possibility that the ‘cyclical’ and ‘linear’ views of time may both be phases, one at the giga or mega level and the other at the ordinary macro level, of the one reality of time and so on.

I had been hoping that the Cologne Symposium would consider its central theme, namely some conceptual formulation of the interface between Newtonian or Classical Mechanics and Quantum Mechanics, in the context of some larger philosophical considerations, like the very nature of time, space, causality and measurement.

I had also hoped that there would be room to consider some non-Western conceptualisations, particularly in the Buddhist thought of India's Nagarjuna and China's Hua Yen (*Avatamsakasutra*). I think the late renowned British theoretical physicist, David Bohm, got his ideas about ‘implicate order’ and ‘holographic universe in the rheomode with total mutual inter-connectedness’ from Hua Yen. David had been present at the last similar symposium I had attended some six years ago at the University of Joensuu in Finland. He was the one leading physicist who stood against the widely accepted ‘Copenhagen Interpretation’ of what happens when a quantal event is measured in classical terms. The latter interpretation was developed by physicists

like Niels Bohr at Copenhagen University. *Look up some reference to make sure that my interpretation of CI is basically accurate. Then go on to Hua Yen and then to Nagarjuna as interpreted by the Japanese and by David Kalupahana.*

* * * * *

Wuppertal, June 11, 1993

Today is the Day of the Lord.

I feel much better today. So much to praise God for. My blood sugar level must have started going down. I have some movement in three fingers of my left hand, and also in the left ankle. The left shoulder and left elbow had improved already yesterday. Today I look forward to more intensified physiotherapy and exercises.

The fundamental question I have always asked becomes a bit more complicated. How do I move my left hand, any time, including when I am well? I have been told that the basic framework for all animal movement is the bone-muscle-nerve collaboration, controlled by electric or electronic impulses generated in the brain and transmitted by the neural system. I have never been told how a thought in the mind/will (the separation of mind and will as two entities is a western philosophical malady), that is, how mind-induced and therefore supposedly non-physical and non-chemical impulse can generate that chemical change in some part of the brain tissue which is then supposed to transmit a message through neural tissue to the appropriate muscles. Psychic energy is a form of energy the laws of which modern science has not yet formulated with anywhere near the precision required. In my case the psychic energy itself seems to be fairly in tact; the brain is in good health. Is it the capacity of that psychic energy to induce chemical change that is inhibited, or is it only that the impulse generated cannot be transmitted because of neural incapacity? I must find out... That is, if somebody really knows!

Supplement, 4th of July Sunday three weeks later.

I must have been too optimistic, when I wrote that three weeks ago. The *pace* of progress has certainly slowed down, though there is still progress every day. The blood sugar had not come under control,



and is still somewhat unstable, with 28 units in the morning and 14 in the evening. I have been so weak and so without energy, that I have not been able to undergo the full programme of physio-therapy they have here. They have very generously deputed three people to do physiotherapy for me: Matina, Tanja and schaeffer. Matina in her thirties, seems quite competent, speaks fair English, stutters badly when excited. On the last day of treatment i.e., day before yesterday, she explained to me, when she came to say Good-bye, why we had clashed in our personalities earlier.

Matina says that in most cases of cerebral stroke, the brain itself cannot create any impulses to be passed on to the muscles. The muscles, she says have to be forced into action, and the brain will catch on and follow. This may well be true. Anyway she took me to be in the same situation and instead of asking me to do things with my left side, just tried to take over my body, and to make muscles do things by force, and I must admit she has great physical strength. I objected to that forcing of my body, and had to tell her that she was doing the wrong thing, and that I was a human being and not a thing to be manipulated by her. It was rather rough speaking on my part; she was doing what she thought was right. She wanted my muscles to act first, and then wanted the muscles to transmit information to the brain to say that that was what was required. But by the grace of God my brain was in perfect shape, as was shown in the CAT (Computer Analysed Tomography) some days later. My brain could make demands on the muscles, but the neural tissue that mediates between the brain and the muscles was not functioning properly. Matina slowly changed her ways and began giving me verbal instructions, but could not withhold herself from still trying to control my muscles and joints. Out of sheer habit, I should think.

Tomorrow I am supposed to go to the Kurklinik in Bad Laasphe. Last night I tried to do things which I had not been able to do before, for example going to bed without help. I was very tired yesterday, after all the mental effort to pack and get ready to leave. Kunhumon (Thomas) and Sunny were helping me, and there cropped up the problem of working with people whose minds are slower than mine. By 7 pm they were gone, packing 90% done, and I was totally

exhausted, just telling two wellmeaning people what to do. I went to bed with some minimal help, and rested for about two hours sleeping off and on. At 9.30 pm I wanted to get up, and rang for the night duty nurse, who turned out to be one of these maladroit German girls. The only help I need now to get up, is a little push on my top body as it rises from the bed. She handled it so badly that I almost fell. I was angry with her and told her to go away from before me. She said to me in German she only wanted to help, and I shouted again, rather unkindly: "just go away." I got off from the bed by myself as I have been doing these days, went to the bathroom, came back and settled in my chair for a game of SCRABBLE. The game went unusually well, and B scored 1490 points against A's 486 or so, which was pretty good. It was 11.15 when I started the second game, which did not go so well and I decided to try to get back to bed without calling the nurse. I had been given a foot-stool, rather a foot-bench (in German, *fuessbank*), because of the aedema and inflammation in my left leg. I managed to push the foot-bench near enough to my bed, put my feet on it, lifting the left leg with my right hand, and fell into bed. I was a bit anxious, but it worked.

Today is Sunday, and I have a few remarkable feats to my credit. I managed with slight help from the morning duty nurse, to get up. She is also rather maladroit, and careless, perhaps also uncaring. Again I asked her to leave the room, did my ablutions, took off my night clothes myself, went into the bathroom to give myself a good sponge - bath (I would have taken a shower if Thomas had been there to help a little with the towelling). After washing and drying I sat on the toilet seat and tried to put on my underpants myself. I was not sure I could do it; but I did it, though not without a lot of ingenious and strenuous effort. I was rather triumphant, and came back and sat on my chair, determined to put on my white pants myself. Again with some effort I managed both my pants and the new yellow Chinese silk cardigan. Only then I rang for the nurse, and fortunately it was the senior polish nurse whom I like and who is very gentle and thoughtful always. She helped me to get into my new shirt, after I had taken off the yellow cardigan. She teased me about what was the *feiertag* (dressing up for the special celebration) all about with new clothes and all that.

By 8 am Thomas came, gave me my insulin and breakfast, helped

me, though somewhat clumsily, to get into my white cassock, and wheeled me off to the hospital chapel on the ground floor, for the Catholic Mass which I find very congenial. It was that senior priest of the order of the Holy Cross (Dutch) who always bows his head before me and asks for a blessing and who is very devout, though he looks like a bulldog. After the mass he came again to my room and asked for another blessing. I made the sign of the cross three times with my thumb on his forehead and blessed him.

I feel very good now sitting here at the desk. The Lord has spoken to me today, with great love and compassion. The first thing he tells me is that God should not be taken too lightly as I am nowadays prone to do. He reminds me that “our God is a consuming fire”, and I should not forget all the instances in which people have been punished for approaching the presence of God without due reverence. I must take that word a bit seriously, because I often behave heedlessly towards Him whom my heart adores, but my mind forgets to fear and stand in awe of.

The second thing he has told me very clearly is that without holiness no one comes to the Lord, and a little root of evil springing up in the soul is sufficient to alienate me from God. The last few weeks have been difficult without any physical exercise whatsoever. The body becomes indolent and the mind unalert I have never had this many physical contacts with female bodies in my total life before as I am having in this hospital, from morning to evening. And so much variety. All of them handling my half inert body. I must learn to control my thoughts and desires, and root out all forms of evil from my heart. A pure heart too is a gift from God and I must pray more fervently for it.

The third thing, all three being from the last chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is that the Lord chastises those whom he loves. I must not complain about my slight suffering. It is very light punishment for some heavy sinfulness on my part. He is a loving Father, and He not only has the right to punish me, but He is doing it for my own good. His name be praised for ever!

In the German Mass this morning, I could follow the service itself, but not the homily. Since the Old priest’s basic attitude is all right, the sermon did not grate on me as it often does. While he was preaching, I went on reflecting with a bowed head.

Is there a Crisis in the Christian Church? Is it confined to the Western Church, both Catholic and Protestant? Are the Orthodox churches basically better off, at least at the point where this crisis hits the Church?

Maybe there is a difference; maybe it is just a matter of degree. But let us look at the nature of the crisis itself, so that we can understand the difference if any.

I have a hunch. Maybe I am mistaken; but this is more of a crisis in Western civilisation than in the western civilisation than in the Western church as such. I think I hit the bull's eye, writing my book on Enlightenment - East and west, several years ago, sitting in that not too pleasant room at the Rashtrapati Nivas, Princes Extension in Shimla. This present western civilisation which passes for a global one, was created by Europe out of its own religious and secular cultural history and that strange 18th century process which has come to be called the European Enlightenment. It is basically a godless civilisation, in which western man, out of sheer *avarice* and greed, has presumptuously committed parricide, killed God the Father and have taken over the running of the world, co-opting a few from other races to run the show for the white Man and primarily for his (and her) benefit above every other consideration! western woman is a full participant in this parricide and in taking over the world. The feminist movement, which has some concerns which are compellingly legitimate, also helps to camouflage western woman's full participation in world domination and exploitation, by pretending that the whole problem of the world is that of men exploiting women.

The western church took its present shape in the culture created by the European Enlightenment, and it is that shape which is now in crisis.

Tuesday, 6th July 1993.

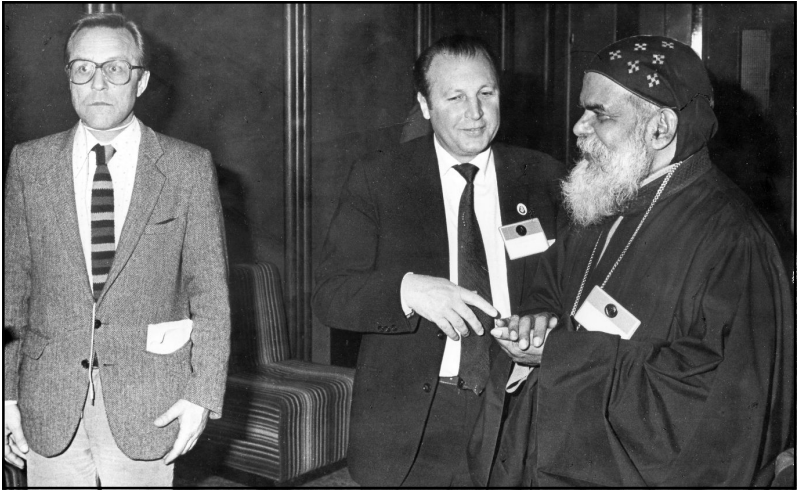
The two and a half hour (not one hour as I wrongly judged from the map) trip from wuppertal to Bad Laasphe went reasonably well. Korah Varghese Achen (he is a careful and experienced driver) was driving, and Thomas (Kunhumon) was accompanying. I decided to travel in the back seat since there was more room there for all the

pillows I needed. None of us, including my two fellow travellers, had even heard about a place called Bad Laasphe two weeks before. It certainly is not a well known Kurort, and by no means my first choice. But being choosy about a proper Rehaklinik is what delayed my discharge from hospital. So I had to accept what was first available, if only to get out of my imprisonment at the Krankenhaus Sankt Josef which had already lasted five weeks.

Well, the place is not so bad. it is not a luxury place like the others I had looked for, nor does it cost even one-third as much. The others were in the range of DM 600 to 1000 per day. This one, if I am not mistaken, is certainly economy class, and should be more like DM 200 per day. That is a lot of saving of the German churches' money, with which they have not been too ungenerous or very reluctant to part with. If I had known that this is all it costs, I would do not have bothered Konrad Reiser, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches with a request for financial help through the German churches.

The area is beautifully wooded, and the town is charming with most of the roofs in slanting blue-grey slate, except the big modern buildings (including Kurklinik Bad Laasphe, where I am lodged) which are characteristically ugly and an insult to the landscape as far as architecture goes. But the view out of my window and balcony is superb. Rolling green hills, flocks of birds showing off with all kinds of group aerobatics like the Indian Air Force on Republic Day, and when I say, "magnificent"! to myself, gladly obliging me with more than one repeat performance. The sky was clear blue when I arrived yesterday, but right now it has become grey and wet. Even under a grey sky, the blue-grey gables of the houses fit necely with the myriad shades of luscious green.

The section of the building in which I am housed is brand new. In fact the scaffolding is not yet taken off, as there is still finishing work going on the outside of the building. Some construction noise (sawing, drving nails in) going on, but the noise is bearable. When it ceases in the evening, the place is astoundingly peaceful and silent. My room is 440, corner room on the top, normally a double room, given to me as a special case for single occupancy. I am told that I am the very first



occupant of not only my room, but of the whole fourth floor of the new section which is otherwise unoccupied and therefore very tranquil; of course it takes a long time for nursing assistance to arrive when summoned.

They are very friendly here to me, even more friendly than the Wuppertal people. They are all Germans, whereas in Wuppertal I had a more international crowd to look after me - Turks, Poles, Bosnians and so on. The chief physician is Dr. Donau (Danube), a German (Jew?) born and brought up in Romania, near Russian border, an internist trained in Germany. He speaks no English, but good Romanian and a little French. But he speaks his German very clearly and distinctly, and I seem to understand more than 90% of what he says. To me he is exceptionally kind and considerate, and comes to see me in my room three times a day enquiring also about my personal needs and plans.

I was rash enough to order a small TV in my room, and that became my favourite distraction for the rest of the day. German TV is just about as boring as Doordarshan, at least in this hill tract of Germany, without cable TV. My German will improve very quickly, I console myself.

Wednesday, July 7th.

Dr. Donau has come twice today already. His colleague, the orthopaedist, also German from the Black forest area near Freiburg, speaks excellent English, having served in South Africa and Kenya in the Eighties. He came for a friendly visit and I know now that there is one person here who speaks good English. Dr. Donau sent him to me to reassure me.

Today I showed Bundespresident Richard Weizsaecker's letter to Dr. Donau, and he was impressed beyond words, and took the letter with him to show it to his colleagues. ...

Saturday, July 10, 1993

Bad Laasphe, Germany

This is the end of my first week in Bad Laasphe. My health is better. The last two days I did a considerable amount of walking. On Thursday I even went out shopping with Dr. Lore Rittmayer, my

collegemate in Goshen forty or more years ago. Yesterday and the day before the Krankengymnasium attendant took me out for walks in the corridors of this building, and yesterday I walked most of the distance without my stick, and even went out to the street in front, walking 20 or more steps down the sloping street and back.

This is the second time Lore is driving up from Konstanz (five hours or more) to see me, the first visit being in Wuppertal. She helped me buy some *Bermuda* shorts and T-Shirts for use while I am convalescing. She has just retired after thirty or more years as a Gymnasium teacher in Konstanz, and she showed me the full column encomium published by the Konstanz paper on her retirement. She wants desperately to nurse me and help me during this period of disability and convalescence for me; she wants to do it out of genuine love for me and also for the purpose of doing something useful for somebody.

I have known her for 43 years now, ever since we were at Goshen together in 1950. She is full of goodness and always willing to help those in need. But I must manage to do without too much of her help. In the first place she can be very insensitive even while trying to help. In the second place, though there are moments when our conversation can be scintillating (especially when she is at the listening end!), generally speaking, she bores me and distracts me from reading or writing. But she is really good and kind.

The main advantages of Bad Laasphe over Wuppertal are:

1. quieter, more beautiful, more healthy setting;
2. fewer international phone calls and fewer invasions of privacy by visitors;
3. fewer tests and prickings for blood test, fewer injections;
4. infinitely better food;
5. a better appointed room;
6. doctors and nurses who are less problematic; and
7. about one-third of the cost at Wuppertal.

And still only hopefully, better therapy. So far I have had only some carbon dioxide gas treatments and two shoulder packs which are very relaxing. The gas treatment consists in putting three quarters of one's body (not the arms) in a plastic sack about 4.5 ft long, tying it tight and then pumping carbon dioxide gas into it with a huge pump, inflating the sack to its full size, and then leaving you there (on your

bed) for 45 minutes. It warms up the legs and is supposed to promote circulation of blood and stimulate nerves and muscles. Dr. Donau things I am still not well enough to undertake heavy Krankengymnastics or Bewegungsbaden. He thinks there is plenty of time to do all those things in the next two or three weeks. On Monday more intensive therapy should begin.

I must find out whether these are the final amounts. I think that Mr. Maassen, the Director of St. Josef Hospital, who had told me that they were giving me the entire treatment free, is now trying to get some of that money from the Evangelicals.

Saturday and Sunday here must be totally inactive here, except for insulin and meals. I eat about 6 times a day; they want me to do so. Breakfast at 8.00; snack at 10.30; lunch at 12.00; afternoon “coffee” (in my case without coffee) at 2.30; dinner at 6.00 and bedtime snack at 10.00 pm. This is supposed to be necessary for insulin - treated diabetes. I hope not. I can not hope to maintain such a regime in conferences and while travelling. We will see.”

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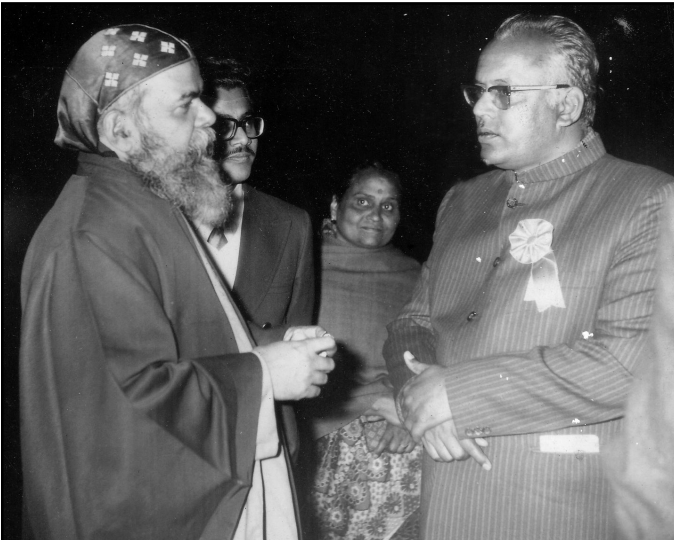
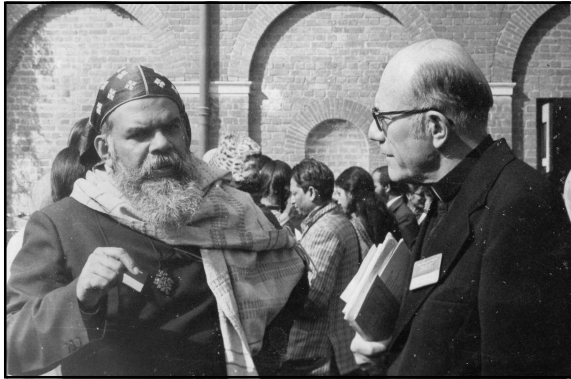
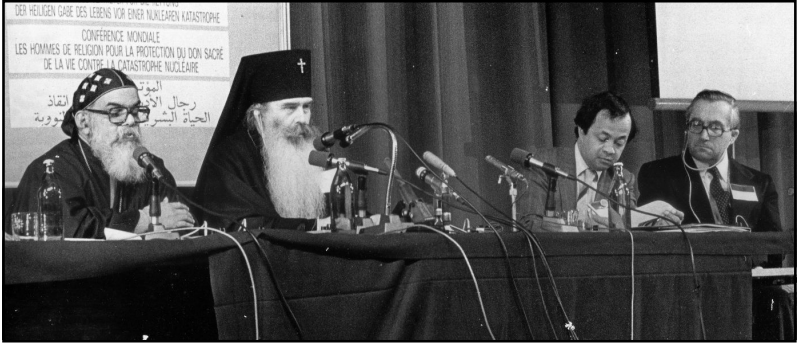
Letters to K. M. Mathew

My dear Mathukutty,

This is only to report to all concerned that by the grace of God, I am progressing remarkably well in this catholic hospital where everyone is most kind and takes good care of me. Our people, especially Mr. & Mrs. Thomas and Korah Varghese Achen looking after my needs.

As you know, I had a stroke while travelling from Oxford to Cologne on May Twentyninth for attending a very important five-day symposium with leading world physicists on the foundations of theoretical physics held June 1-5 at the high energy physics Institute of the University of Cologne, which I was very sorry to miss.

I was carried directly to this hospital by our people, from the cologne airport. I was actually supposed to stay in the Guestroom of this hospital. For Qurbana in cologne for our people on pentecost



Sunday instead I was admitted to the emergency clinic that was going on, Saturday evening at seven thirty P.M.

At first after observing ECG irregularity, the doctors suspected cardiac problem. I was in intensive care for twentyfour hours. Heart is still under observation and so far normal. There is total paralysis of the left half of the body, but, God be praised - no impairment of speech or any brain functions. I am typing this message with my one (right) hand which is normal. Paralysed left side already beginning to improve with slight motor function coming back to left knee and shoulder. Getting very good physiotherapy will probably have to stay in this friendly, well equipped and well run catholic hospital. For another week or more and then move to a rehabilitation centre in Germany for a few weeks. I am still hoping to get back to India by mid-July if the Lord permits.

It may interest you to know that the staff in this 300 bed hospital is very international. The lady who cleans my room every day is a bosnian muslim with three children of her own, the chief physician Dr. Georg, from Trier, Germany is kind, unusually friendly and competent. The assistant doctor Wieberova, from Poland, is very kind and caring. There are ten or so Malayalees working here including three Roman Catholic sisters from Kerala. One of the nurses attending me is a turkish muslim girl doing one year of voluntary service here. Invariably everyone is kind to me.

I am not yet well. Enough to receive many visitors or talk for a long time. Neither is it good for me to receive many telephone calls. The best way to contact me is by the above fax number. Kindly pass on a photocopy of this message to Bawa thirumeni and also to the seminary. I have no objection to your publishing the information. Please ask someone at the seminary to contact me by fax and give me all news. I had written to them shortly before I fell sick.”

* * * * *

My dear Mathukutty,

Blessings and greetings to you from this rehabilitation centre in a resort town in the high hills of Wittgensteiner Forest in central Germany. I moved here on July 5th, and have settled down comfortably in a fourth floor corner room overlooking the rolling green hills and

the charming town of Bad Laasphe, about one hour drive up the mountain from the university town of Marburg. They have all kinds of rehabilitation therapy here, including many kinds of massage, mudpacks herbal and mineral baths, physiotherapy of ten different kinds. I have already made some progress in the two days I have been here. I plan to be here till at least the end of July. The cost of my stay and treatment here is being met by the Evangelical Church in Germany, at the personal request of Dr. Konrad Reiser, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. As you know the Catholic Hospital in Wuppertal bore the enormous five weeks hospital cost with all doctors' fees, medicines and tests included. The Protestants will pay my four weeks bill here. I am grateful to the Christian churches of Germany for all their goodness to me.

My health has been improving very fast, by the grace of God. I can do most of my personal chores myself now, without much difficulty. I get up from bed without help, go to the bathroom, brush my teeth and take a shower, dry myself, and put on most of my clothes, all with one hand, without any help. That is tremendous progress over the last few days. The left knee is very weak, and I can only walk a few steps, and that too with great care and concentration. I can lift the left arm a few inches, but cannot pick up even a piece of paper with it. The half paralysis will still take several weeks to heal. There are no Malayalees or Syrian Christians anywhere near here, but the staff of the Rehabilitation clinic is taking excellent care of all my needs. There are several doctors here who are specialists. I am looked after by the Chief Physician Dr. Donau, a friendly and competent German from Romania. He comes to see me three times a day. I have to deal with all the staff here in German, since most of them do not speak English. They are giving me VIP treatment, and go out of their way to please me, and have already invited me to stay here beyond the four weeks if necessary, especially since they saw the following letter.

Three days ago I had this lovely letter from Dr. Richard von Weizsaecker, the President of the German Republic. He has been a good friend for more than thirty years. As you probably know, when he visited India last year, he invited me to lunch and I had a good long

conversation with him in Madras. I give below the English translation of his personal letter to me (in German) dated July st, 1993, from Bonn:

“Your Eminence, my beloved and honoured friend,

It is with a great sense of sorrow that I have read that you have to spend a considerable amount of time in the St. Joseph Hospital in Wuppertal. This disturbs me unusually, and I hope very much that your health has been improving steadily in the meantime.

As for the expenses for your treatment, the office of the Federal President had taken up contact with various institutions. I am glad that a solution has now been found, which will relieve you of all anxiety on that count.

Personally, With my whole heart, I wish that you make fast progress in recovering your health, and that you will soon be well enough to undertake the journey back home.

In heartfelt sympathy, I am, with my best wishes and greetings,

Your Richard Weizsaecker”

He is a man for whom I have the greatest respect and affection despite our differences in political and economic views. Alas, he may not stay very long as Bundespresident. He is one of the few good people in high office in the world.

Could you kindly ask your office to give one copy of this to Bawa Thirumeni and one to the Seminary. I get somany good letters and phone calls every day, including one from P C Alexander and Accamma. Would you also give my new address and phone number to the Governor’s PA in Bombay. Does he have a fax? Otherwise P J Koshy can pass it on.

Thank you indeed for sending me Manorama. It takes about a week to reach Wuppertal, and they are forwarding mail to me here. I could understand the Harshad Mehta - One crore scandal better

because of your excellent coverage. Did you know that Sat Pal Mittal is a man whom I knew very well and worked with in the organisation called "Global Forum for Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders" of which he was co-president? Of course I would not vouch for his integrity or that of his sons, who are all big money-makers, and who would not hesitate to use service organisations to advance their own personal interests.

Affectionately,

Paulos Mar Gregorios

* * * * *

May 10, 1995

My Dear Mathukkutty,

I am here in Florida USA, undergoing a two week treatment in Cranio Sacral Therapy at the Research Institute of Dr. John Upledger, a member of the US Government's special team for Alternative Therapy. It is one of the newly emerging therapies for people with chronic back problems. It seems the method has so far been successful in more than 80% of the cases. It is my last chance for a permanent cure, and since they had already tried everything possible in Delhi Hospitals, and they had covered up Allopathic ignorance by simply diagnosing it as Polymyalgia Arthritica, and putting me on steroids, which is now ruining my bladder control and diabetetic sugar control; life became rather impossible in Delhi since there was no one in the Diocese who could look after my treatment needs. I felt very much like an orphan and did not want to fall a victim to the Church's callous lack of care for its bishops - Pachomius Thirumeni was the last victim of that carelessness.

It was a great risk to undertake the long trip to Miami unaccompanied. And I did pay the price. In Rome after I had boarded the Alitalia plane for Miami and taken my seat in Business Class, the Captain of the Flight told me that I was physiologically unfit to travel. They offloaded me in Fiumicino Airport and took me to a hospital. I had been drenched with urine, resulting from my bladder incontinence, which had become quite bad with the Steroids. I could have

gotten through the transit in Rome all right if they had given me the facilities to change planes without making me stand very long, and also making me climb up the many steps to the big Miami plane no my own. Anyway all they did in the hospital was to take away my clothes and sterilise them, and also wash and sterilize my body also. They gave me a change of (horrible) clothes and whisked me to the New York plane that was leaving at 1230. What with a three hour wait in Kennedy Airport, after immigration and customs clearance, I got to Miami at 2130 hours. Our Achen was waiting for me and I got to my hotel room at 30 minutes past midnight, after having been on the road for more than 48 hours. I had not been able to take my insulin and other medicines all day Sunday; in Palm Beach Gardens, I slept for some 15 hours and woke up totally without energy and quite helpless. The Achen here, Fr. Joy Pyngolil and others have been taking good care of me. I began my treatment on Tuesday, and even after only one session, I already feel better. There is every possibility that I will be healed here in two weeks.

I have laid down all my church administrative duties as of May 1, 1995. I have not given charge to Mar Philoxenos, because I had no instruction to do so from the Synod. ... But my view does not count in our Church; it is easy to spoil a diocese, which has been built up with great self-sacrifice on the part of our people and priests. perhaps I have also contributed something to the building up of the diocese and its 30 churches. I plan to stay on at the Delhi Orthodox Centre, and continue to work with Sophia Society, Sarva Dharma Nilaya and Niti Santhi Kendra. I may also develop some new projects, in order to continue to use my limited talents and experience.

If I am well in the next few weeks, I have a major lecture to deliver at Vanderbilt University in Nashville Tennessee, and read a paper in a Toronto meeting in the first week of June. According to present plans I should be back in Kottayam by June 14th and stay for two weeks, to do some things for the Seminary. Whenever the authorities in the Church feel that somebody else can do the Principal's Job better, they would not have to dismiss me; just appoint another person, and I will readily hand over charge.

I think that some day ... should come here for treatment. So few doctors in this country or in ours have even heard about the Upledger Institute. But it is a proven success, and I will send you details if needed. I hope your own health is good.

If any part of this letter is of interest to others, you may publish the ...

All good wishes and blessings

Paulos Mar Gregorios

APPENDIX: 2

HOW MY MIND HAS CHANGED: A SACRAMENTAL HUMANISM

Regaining Control of Economic, Social and Political Structures is a key task for which we need more than Revolutionary Techniques and Global Strategies

CHANGE of the mind, like growth of the body, is generally imperceptible. As the body sloughs off cells and forms new ones, so the mind quietly casts aside thoughts and ideas and replaces them by others. Only occasionally - at pubescence and middle age, for instance - are there more dramatic changes.

Theologically, I seem during this past decade to have passed through pubescence and come into a cantankerous and boisterous adolescence. Not that I like too much to talk theology. My deliverance from childhood - that is, from Western tutelage - has taught me above all the wisdom of silence. That way, one's contribution to the cacophony of nonsense is at least drastically reduced.

I

A father-figure comes in handy for the adolescent's discovery of self-identity-especially if the figure is dominant and powerful enough to make one's revolt look all the more heroic. For me, Augustine of Hippo was such a figure. What a release it was to learn, in 1959-60, that he was the spring and fount of all creative Western theology, and then to make the gratifying discovery that this source was poisoned! I had already discovered that, as an Eastern Christian, I did not even need to call Augustine a saint. His name appears neither on our liturgical calendar nor in our manuals of theology. The Eastern tradition had wisely ignored him and felt none the poorer for it. What if my supervisor at Oxford insisted that only Western thinkers like Augustine could think problems through? It was this well known professor's incapacity to understand Eastern thought, together with his adoption of Augustinianism as a standard by which to measure the doctrines of others, that prompted my revolt (I refer to J. N. D. Kelly, whose *Early Christian Doctrines* summarizes his theological views).

Quite seriously, I believe today that Western theology cannot reorient itself until it takes a second look at some of Augustine's basic ideas. This is not the place to enter into a full criticism. Let me merely indicate five areas where re-examination could reveal basic flaws in Augustine's thought.

First, Augustine's low view of matter leads him to a low view of the incarnation of our Lord. Taking his cue from the early Athanasius, the bishop thought of the incarnate body primarily as a come-on drawing us to contemplation of loftier spiritual realities. The material body of our Lord was but an instrument of revelation.

Second, and probably because of the same vestigial Manicheanism which undervalued matter, Augustine had a low view of this world. The polarity in his thinking between the *civitas mundi* and the *civitas Dei* can only be termed alarming. Western theology is still learning to correct this basic error which has had so many consequences.

Third, because his view of the human element in the incarnation is so low, he holds a low view of man. By taking sin as almost constitutive of human nature, Augustine led the Western church astray-toward denial of the freedom and dignity of all men, Christian or non-Christian. He makes man so utterly dependent and slavish in relation to God that God is distorted in to an arbitrary dictator like the Caesars-a petty God whose glory has to be vindicated at the expense of the glory of man. But only a God who can be glorified in the glory of man is worth worshipping.

Fourth, Augustine's Soteriology went wrong because of his preoccupation with individual and personal sin, original and actual. Salvation is more than deliverance from sin. It is making man like God, bringing him in to the fullness of humanity. We today are caught in a negative and individual view of salvation.

Fifth, by his failure to understand the sacramental principle as integral to the human condition and to the incarnation (man is a citizen of two worlds), Augustine contributed to a substantial distortion of the sacraments as accommodations of spiritual realities to suit the grossness of man. His misconception of the ordained ministry is also a result of his misunderstanding of the true relation of word to sacrament.

These five points (I state them in shorthand) are crucial for the understanding of what Christianity is all about, and my change of mind in the past ten years can be said to focus on them. Any dialogue between East and West must begin on these points, and we may find that, Christianity being after all an Eastern religion, the ancient Eastern approach Augustine deviated from still has much to say to us.

“Augustine will survive your criticism,” another all-knowing professor told me some time ago, without making any attempt to understand what I was saying. Augustine probably will survive, for he deserves to. He was a great genius, a spiritual and intellectual giant. My purpose is not to destroy his reputation but to seek the renewal of theology in a truly ecumenical context, rather than in the shallow atmosphere and narrow confines of a secular urban-technological civilization in an Augustinian frame work. It is the survival of the Western interpretation of the Christian faith that I have grave doubts about.

My reaction against Augustinianism did not lead me to a superficial liberal theology (as it did to many in the West in the earlier decades of our century). I now subscribe to a sacramental and ecclesiological humanism.

II

A second major change in my mind has been a growing skepticism about the power of words. The printing press seems to have destroyed the power of the written word, and excesses in speech-making destroyed power of the spoken word long ago.

The theologian sometimes thinks that the problem of the church today is the lack of the right words—in short, of a relevant theology. But the world is not waiting for new words; it is waiting for Godot—a pattern of life, a type of personality, a way of living, being, doing, thinking. It is our professional bias that makes us think a new theology will solve our problems. Only God is going to solve our problems. Perhaps, however, a new pattern of living the Christian life may open the way.

This faulty reliance on words and forms of words is found not

only in the West. Here in India, too many people talk and talk and talk about an “indigenous” theology as the cure-all-but never produce one. For a fresh theology has to come out of a new way of living the Christian life in Indian conditions. Such a new way of life is both the matrix and the authentication of a new theology anywhere. Young people especially are looking for a person or a type that is authentic, not for new words.

What a misunderstanding it is to think that communication takes place mainly by words! Voice and ear and even the conscious mind form but a part of the communication system between human beings. Psychologists have been long at work on the role of “kinesic and paralinguistic information” in communication. Our actions, our gestures, the very lines on our faces, all communicate.

Thus I have come to believe that being and doing are more important than speaking in communication. And anyone can see how that belief in itself devalues theology considerably.

III

A third area in which my mind has changed in the past ten years is in regard to the dialectic between structural relations and personal relations. I had never quite seen how the larger framework of society substantially affected personality. But by observing the faces of people of various nationalities and religious groups, I began to see that structural values and national ethos can change a person's face and also that a facial change is always the result of change in personality. This conclusion was reinforced as I watched those of my own countrymen who had spent five or six years studying abroad. I discovered that each country sojourned in produced a different type of personality. Even the particular institution attended made a difference.

But more important for me was the “middle level”-that between large structural relationships, as in the nation, and intimate personal relationship, as in the family. The small group, in which intimacy and a degree of independence are combined and structural relations are consciously accepted, such now seems to me the milieu in which the new humanity can be most effectively shaped, both as a social

structure and as individual persons. Such a group must be a school for its members, a place where work, worship, study, play, property relations, recreation and repose are all suitably balanced in order to shape a new type of personality which will work actively for the transformation of society. More than any new theology, we need many such pioneering, committed, socially alert groups.

IV

A fourth area in which my mind has changed is closely related to the third. I have come to a new-or rather, a very old-understanding of freedom. Freedom in the positive sense means creativity that is spontaneous, not caused by external pressures; it is the capacity to conceive the good in new forms and then to create that good. To be free also means not to be directed by one's passions and ambitions or deterred from action by false inhibitions and complexes. Freedom is something given to man so that, while being part of creation, he can himself become a creator and alter the shape, the direction and the meaning of creation.

The fresh insight for me lay in understanding freedom in a structural context. Not that I had chosen sides in the argument between Claude Levi-Strauss and Jean-Paul Sartre, between structuralism and existentialism. On the contrary, I saw that individual freedom is inseparable from the freedom of the collective (the community) to choose its own goals as a society and to work to achieve them. Ultimately it is humanity that must be free. The measure of freedom that a Gandhi, a Sartre, a Jean Genet, a St. Francis able to acquire is but an incentive to society to seek its own freedom as part of the human community. Satre and Genet go wrong simply because they have insisted on their individual freedom without in the same act choosing also the freedom of mankind. The individual quest for freedom takes place in an alienated framework. It can bring only misery so long as my intention is to establish my identity over against "the masses." No matter if I become one of the masses provided that thereby the masses would become free; for in their freedom-i.e., in their capacity to conceive, choose and attain the good-I shall find my own fulfillment. My fairly total abandonment of the two

extremes of existentialist and structuralist philosophy and theology may be understood in this context.

V

A fifth area of significant change is in my understanding of mission and missions. For a long time I had suspected that modern Catholic and Protestant missions were expressions of the cultural and economic aggressiveness of the West-though probably a certain aggressiveness has always characterized Christian mission. However, during the past ten years I have had occasion to watch “the show” from inside, and my negative reaction to the mission of the Western church has developed to a high pitch. The basic mistake of Western mission is not so much cultural aggression as missionary colonialism. Never before in church history has mission been as completely institutionalized as in the years since 1500 which saw the expansion of the West. In the previous centuries when a missionary went to another country to evangelize he preached the gospel, established the church and probably died there. There was no need for a second generation of missionaries, though occasionally a teacher or a bishop might visit the mission field.

But this idea that missionaries must go in every generation, that they should be organized, their finances looked after, life and medical insurance provided, cars, bungalows and compounds furnished-all that seems to me to kill mission. Today it is economic imperialism or neocolonialism that is the pattern in missions. Relief agencies and mission boards control the younger churches through the purse-strings. Foreign finances, ideas and personnel still dominate the younger churches and stifle their spontaneous growth.

My disgust with this pattern has made me suspect even the ecumenical movement. Catholic and Protestant seem to be collaborators in this neocolonialist domination and Western cultural imperialism in the ecclesiastical sphere. So now I say, “The mission of the church is the greatest enemy of the gospel.” I began to say it 15 years ago, rather softly. Very rarely did I find any creative response. Therefore I have decided to be rude and rough about this matter. I still do not have much hope that the Western churches (or even the

dependent non-Western churches) will see the point, because to see it is to be pushed to most drastic changes in church life both in the West and in the rest.

VI

A sixth area in which my mind has changed in the past ten years is that of the relation between sacrament and society. Today I can accept only a sacramental-ecclesiological social ethics. The stuff that comes out of ecumenical conferences claiming to be Christian social ethics bores me no end. I can understand human society only on the analogy of the church. My notions of social justice come from my understanding of the communion of saints. And I can understand the ministry of the church in the world only in terms of a fresh understanding of the sacramental principle and the sacramental ministry. But how can I even indicate here the scope of my book-length thoughts in these areas?

Finally, my mind has changed in relation to the nature and destiny of man. I now firmly believe that the destiny of man is to be like God in every respect except that of being a noncreature; i.e., God is the source of his own being, but man's being will always be derived from God. Yet in love, wisdom and power, as well as in holiness-which is after all something more than the combination of these three-man must become like God. That alone gives me a new perspective for understanding the human vocation on earth and beyond. Again, a book-length idea.

Without being pedantic and academic, one could say that what God has done in Christ has consequences for all men. To use Roman Catholic terminology, all men, Christians and non-Christians, are in the realm of "supernatural grace" stemming from the incarnation. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ make a difference for the history of the world and the destiny of mankind. All the secular ideas and forces smacking of salvation that are in vogue today come from the Christ event and the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Man's attempt to build a tower of Babel was reprimanded and frustrated by God. Today, God allows man to build many towers of Babel-to go to the extremes of *hubris* and blasphemy, to defy the

divine and erect a secular city. That is, man always goes to the edge of catastrophe—"brinkism" is his delight. Yet God has lengthened man's rope, so that even in the misuse of freedom he can travel far. Will God finally let go? He well may. Catastrophe is quite conceivable, and even the resurrection of Christ (*pace* Moltmann and Pannenberg) does not provide insurance against it. For the same Lord predicted both his own resurrection and the apocalyptic denouement of creation. Nor does the fact of hope (a la Bloch) provide a sufficient basis for the notion that things will work out for mankind in history.

VII

In other words, there is no basis for the liberal hope of building the urban technological paradise. There was a time when I thought that the movement toward the Kingdom of God and the movement toward the urban technological society would merge somewhere. I now have second thoughts. Certainly neither the affluent society with its pressure for consumption and the resultant bloated egos, nor the regimented society with its repression of so much that is creative in man, shows us the way to paradise. Alienation and nuclear destruction are twin giants threatening mankind.

These days I think of disarmament and reconciliation as the proximate goals which would lead us in the direction of the Kingdom. Science and technology now have their own momentum and can go on without assistance from the church.

Disarmament and reconciliation are integrally related in my mind. Alienation should be tackled at all its four levels: the chasm that separates urban technical man from God should be bridged; man must regain control of the structures-economic, social and political-that now hold him prisoner; nations, groups and individuals must learn again to trust and have compassion for each other; man must find himself, not in a whirl of activity but in the depths of silence. These four elements together I call "disalienation."

A concrete place to begin is the third area-the disalienation of nations and groups. Here disarmament is to be seen as a positive program. Centralized and widely controlled power should eliminate

group conflicts, and resources now wasted in building up arms reserves should be diverted to science, education, the elimination of poverty and the enhancement of human creativity. Only in trying to build a united and unified humanity can we rediscover the way to God as well as our own being. Regaining control of economic, social and political structures is a key task for which we need more than revolutionary techniques and global strategies. Only a corps of men and women, distributed all over the world, ready to labor and die for the cause, can pioneer the movement for disalienation. And the spiritual dynamism for such a pioneering movement (such as the communist movement once was) can come today only out of a more profound understanding of Semitic Christianity.

I have made no attempt here to be systematic, thorough or detailed. The mind keeps changing, and changing still.

(Christian Century, Sept. 23, 1970, pp. 1116-1120)

APPENDIX: 3

A PERCEPTION ON MYSELF

Ten streams of social awareness which has shaped me as a person

Let me try here, to enumerate, without any attempt to be exhaustive, of at least ten streams which have merged into the stream of social awareness which has shaped me as a person.

(1) First I must identify in myself a strain of perceptionary habits which I can only call “the primal Vision” shared once by all so called primitive peoples of the world, and which I today associate with the tribal peoples of India - the Adivasis and the Girijans.

(2) At a second level, I find that I share in the Vedic consciousness - in my own feeble and imperfect way. I find the heart of the Vedic Consciousness in the concept of *Yajna* or *Yoga*, which to me is true *Yoga*. The concept of sacrifice is not to be moralistically or ritualistically misrepresented, though it has deep moral implications, and *Yajna* without ritual is to me inconceivable. The cosmic egg, the *brahmanda* needs to be held together, by *Yajna* or by a deep moving social rite of abandoning self - abandoning it by offering it to the source of all, to all humanity, and to all that exists. I find this Vedic rite consciousness central to my own Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition.

3. At a third level, as an Indian living in the 20th century, I find in myself a layer that responds to cosmic *Sakti*. I have no objection if you want to relate it to the so called pre Aryan or Dravidian religion. Or you can associate it with Saivism. What matters for me is my own perception of myself as an energy configuration system, dependent upon and drawing from the whole complex of energy systems in the cosmos - the energy of sun and moon, of galaxies and planetary systems, of ocean tides and gravitational fields, of electromagnetic and other yet unidentified force fields. I do not claim that this layer is unrelated to the first and second layers. But *Sakti* is not a matter of the intellect. It is a question of being in tune - to be

charged constantly from the enormously complex force-field that our universe is. And if I try conceptualise the universe merely as a mechanical system which is the object of my knowledge, I am bound to go wrong in my philosophical reasoning.

4. At a fourth level, I must recognise the Buddhist heritage as an important layer in my own identity. Not Buddhism as an intellectual system of four noble truths and the eightfold path, but Buddhism as true enlightenment (as distinct from the rational Enlightenment of the West), as true freedom - freedom from *Kama* and *Trsna* from the myriad passions that unceasingly flail the self and drive it to and fro, from the innumerable false perceptions of the good in the external world towards which I am almost irresistibly drawn, only to find that, an attainment, all imagined good turns out to be but as or trash. I find something deep in me responding to the best in Madhyamika philosophy, especially to Nagarjuna who has convinced me that "it is neither this nor that", that empirical reality is neither false nor true, that everything is caused by "conditioned co-origination", though I would like to include the very concept of *pratitya-samutpada* as an imperfect conceptual hold on something which can never be held in the intellectual grasp. Of course I tend to assimilate this concept to my own Eastern Orthodox Christian maxim of holding the Kataphatic (affirmative) and the apophatic (negative) in dialectical tension. But the Buddha and philosophers like Nagarjuna have clarified my perception of freedom, including freedom from the desire for a final conceptual grasp of reality. The doctrines of *Sunyata* and the irrationality of the concept of causality are other great Buddhist contributions to my own perception.

May I be permitted to enter a caveat at this point, The contemporary Indian philosophical tradition suffers from its failure to take the unorthodox Indian systems seriously. And if the light shining from Gautama and Mahavira have nothing to contribute to my seeing my way. I will be so much the poorer as an Indian. Indian philosophy is largely in Orthodox Brahmin hands, and it is natural that they would have inherited a built-in prejudice against the unorthodox Indian ways of thought. But the liberation of Indian philosophy today demands emancipation from these prejudices and a willingness to learn from

Nagarjuna just as much as from Sankara, from Mahavira just as much as from Ramanuja or Madhva.

After all, what single religion in history has had such impact on all of Asia as Buddhism? It is the one system of thought which led to "the Indianisation of China" and to the transformation of Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Kampuchea, Vietnam, China, Japan and Korea.

The title of an address by Dr. Hu Shih at the Tercentenary Celebration of Harvard University in 1936. See his independence, Convergence and Borrowing Cambridge, Mass, 1937, cited by Kenneth Ch'en. The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism, Princeton, 1973, p. 3.

5. At the fifth level I find my own indebtedness to the Upanisadic - Vedantic perspective on reality. I find the quest for self-realisation by attaining to the one - in consciousness, beyond consciousness - as exhilarating and ennobling. And I mean more than a pedantic and dogmatic enslavement to the thought of one Lokacharya, be it Sankara, Ramanuja or Madhva, Ramakrishna or Pillai Lokacharya. It is a spiritual quest - not merely an intellectual enquiry. It is a discipline to become what one is.

But I want to pursue that quest in a manner not divorced from the compassion which the Buddha and the Christ have taught me. I do not want to separate my quest from my conviction that my fellow human beings should find food, shelter and clothing and be enabled to live a life worthy of human beings, in societies of peace and justice.

I will thus have to reinterpret the Upanisadic quest, in the light of my understanding of historical reality, which I cannot dismiss as mere *Vyavaharika* and therefore as unrelated to the *paramarthika*. I know that our colonial imperialist past, and our neo-colonial-imperialist present are very much a part of the reality, whether *Vyavaharika* or *paramarthika*, to which I must relate myself and within which I must find my Indian-human identity today.

Therefore my commitment to the Upanisadic quest for unity must ever remain in dialectical tension with my social concern. And in

relation to the latter point, none of the Lokacharyas, even Sri Aurobindo (is he formally a Lokacharya, not having written a Brahma Sutra - bhasya?), can be sufficient guide to understanding contemporary social reality and the way the quest for social justice impinges upon the quest for the One.

6. At the sixth level I perceive the early Greek impact on my Indian heritage. Already from the time of Ashoka, there seems to have been a free flow of ideas between the Greek and the Indian civilisations. The edicts of Asoka speak about his spiritual conquest of the "Greeks" in Bactria and Syria, Egypt and Macedonia. It is not idle to presume that the channels so opened for Buddhist monks and missionaries to travel to Central Asia, Europe and Africa were also used in reverse. The apocryphal Apollonius of Tyann reports the debate between Greek and Indian philosophers from a Greek rather than an Indian perspective. If Clement of Alexandria could speak of the Buddha. It is equally conceivable that Greek philosophy came to India through the Brahmins who are reported to be in Alexandria already in the first century, as well as by Greek travellers who visited the courts of Indian princes and conversed with Indian philosophers. I would even detect in this mutual intercourse which must have begun at least three or four centuries before our era, the beginnings of the common features we see in the Hellenic and the Indian traditions - common features like the disparagement of matter, the perception that the soul is a prisoner in the body, and the concept of the worlds that lie between our shadow world and the real world of the muktas, all these later developed in Greek Gnosticism.

I must recognise this early impact of Hellenic culture on the development of the Indian consciousness, for otherwise I would be in danger of presumptuously presuming that the Indian culture and philosophy developed in a total vacuum, untouched by so called foreign elements.

I shall not be diffident to recognise as the seventh element the impact of the semitic civilisation and religion on Indian culture throughout the centuries. And I am not speaking merely of Syrian Christianity in Kerala. I am speaking rather, of successive waves of

Jewish Christian and Muslim traders, immigrants, missionaries and conquerors, who had an impact on India already before the coming of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British in modern times. And this Semitic impact was by no means confined to maritime India. The North-West was particularly inundated with these influences, and what is today Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Pakistan, Kashmir and Punjab, have been deeply influenced, first by numerically not large but a till powerful Jewish immigrants who fled the successive persecutions of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Romans in Palestine, and later the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem around 70 AD. The whole area from the Tigris to the Indus, once comprised in the State of Parthia, was deeply influenced by these Jewish immigrants, in whose wake came also Christians, either fleeing persecution or as in the case of the Persian Christian missionaries, spreading the message of Christ. There were undoubtedly large Christian colonies in the whole of North West India as well as along the coast - right up to Madras. The lack of sufficient research leaves the field free for speculation, but both Ramanuja and Madhva give evidence of reacting to the Semitic impact - at least after the tenth century. Was the impact of Christianity and Islam on the Indian tradition purely negative? One would have to be very naive to think so. Even in the 18th and 19th centuries when the confrontation was between Hinduism and a militant Western Christian culture, the impact was never purely negative. And in the 8th to 15th centuries when Christian and Muslim cultures confronted India's Buddhist, Jain and Hindu cultures, the impact led to fruitful new constructions and insights in Indian philosophy. Our research on pre-moghul interactions between Islamic civilization and Indian religions still remains quite sketchy.

8. I must briefly mention the Persian element as the eighth. We were very conscious of our debt to Persia in the 19th century. In the 20th we have come to forget it. The great leaders of the Indian Renaissance like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the cultural elite of his time had a thorough grounding in Persian civilisation and culture. Iranian mysticism and the dualism of light and darkness have deeply penetrated the Indian soil, and are today part of my heritage. I cannot out of any false pride, deny what I owe to the Persian.

9. The ninth element can only be briefly mentioned - precisely because it is so recent and so well recognized. This is modern western secular civilisation with its institutions, ideals, concepts, ways of thinking and gathering knowledge, its most decisive elements being critical rationality and the empirical philosophy. We have been so monumentally inundated with this strange way of thinking, so that we are not yet unable to sum on up enough critical objectivity to assess what has happened to us in this process, and how much we take the norms and standards of this civilization for granted. There are so many strands in this impact, and I shall not try to even to list them in the short space available here. I simply believe that we have a double task in relation to this most recent impact on our consciousness. On the one hand we have to master the techniques of critical rationality more adequately, in order to reassess all our old perceptions and received traditions. On the other hand, we have to develop sufficient critical distance and objectivity, in order to discern the respective strengths and weaknesses, possibilities and limitations, of critical rationality itself. Here we must learn from Dilthey and Heidegger, from Adorno and Horkheimer, from Gadamer and Habermas, but we must also bring our own non-western critique to bear upon critical rationality as a method.

10. The tenth element which I must recognise as part of my heritage as an Indian comes from the thought of Marx and Engels, Lenin and later Marxist theoreticians. Whether we recognise it or not, the impact of Marxism is there on the Indian Consciousness - in our aspirations for social justice, for the dignity of the worker, for a society without exploitation and oppression, and for socialism in general. Our conscious reactions to Marxism may have been largely conditioned by the media, as well as by the anti-Marxist predilections of most of our intelligentsia. The tragedy of the matter is that even professing members of the communist parties have only a nodding acquaintance with the basic contours of communist strategy, but no profound schooling in its ideological niceties. The marxist impact on our society needs to be recognised and reassessed; but perhaps a deeper initiation into the profound subtleties of Marxism both as a tool for socio-politico-economic analysis and as an ideological map

for human action can help the Indian philosopher deeply rooted in our own traditions, to be both creative and communicative with the modern world.

I have listed these ten elements which I regard as basic to Indian identity and culture, in a some what random fashion. There may be other strands that I have failed to recognize. What I have listed could perhaps be regrouped in a different and more cogent pattern. This list is submitted only as a basic for discussion.

The main point however is this: only an Indian philosophy that has overcome the three alienations and takes fully in to account the various strands that go to make up our Indian culture and identity bids fair to make an impact on world philosophy.

Such an endeavour can hardly be a personal or individual effort. I know of no one who has in himself/herself the necessary equipment to cope with the whole range. In the nature of the case endeavour has to take the form of a corporate or group effort, with intermittent mutual discussion, through several years of sustained toil.

(An extract taken from an article titled, "Evaluation of Indian Philosophy in the context of world philosophy")

APPENDIX: 4

ORTHODOX CHURCHES AND WCC: A LETTER TO FR. DR. K. M. GEORGE

My dear George and George Achen,

I have read your joint letter of March 1994 with some interest, and heartily reciprocate your kind Easter greetings.

I see that you want to hold another consultation on the participation of the Orthodox churches in the WCC. I have only a remote interest in the subject now, because I do not have reason to expect much creative leadership, i.e. Christian leadership with vision and imagination, from the WCC.

I do not have the time to set forth in sufficient detail my basic insights about the Ecumenical Movement in general and the WCC in particular. I will just jot down a few things, in the form of brief statements.

1. The unity of the One church, the one body of Jesus Christ, belongs to the very foundation of the Christian faith. By the very nature of the Church it has to be united and one. This we confess in the Creed, and this I believe.

2. But the unity of the Church does not mean simply the unity of all Christians living now. We have to be one with the Church of all ages and all places. This means continuity with the Apostolic Church and its Apostolic witness. Most churches at present are not fully faithful to that tradition and heritage. The orientation of the Ecumenical Movement should not be to go after the latest fad, but to rediscover and live in greater fullness the Apostolic heritage, which can truly unite us in Christ.

3. True unity is in the good, and the more we live in accordance with the total commitment to Christ and to His universal compassion, the more united we will be as churches. This is why renewal in the church and in personal lives is basic to the ecumenical movement. There can be no unity without renewal. It is the Spirit of God who

unites us in the good. There is so much evil in our churches and in the WCC, which hampers and hinders their work for unity. Some self-assessment of a deeper kind than what goes on now, is needed both in the churches and in the WCC.

4. The Protestant leadership of the WCC puts a higher priority on their hanging on to that leadership, than to the unity of the Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches on the basis of the Apostolic witness. So long as this distorted power hunger remains, there is little possibility of the WCC functioning as a privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement.

5. There are some important issues facing humanity which the WCC should take up on a priority basis. The most important is laying the foundations for a new and more humane civilisation to replace the present inhuman urban technological - industrial - consumerist - nuclear - development alist civilisation, of which the disrupted life environment and war are two major products. The WCC leadership lacks the will and the vision to make the churches pick this up as an ecumenical task - including an examination of the theoretical foundations of all our academic disciplines and of our science and technology. There are other issues - like moving towards some universally acknowledged principles, not moral laws, but some basic principles like love and compassion, integrity and truth, justice and peace, with middle axioms and civil and social laws derived from them - for humans (not just Christians) living together in Koinonia on this planet, a total restructuring of the visible structures of international coherence like the UN system, The TNCs, the emerging unjust global single economy and its institutions and structures, the initiation of new structures to make just international laws and to administer and adjudicate them, i.e. international legislative bodies, executive structures, peace - keeping bodies, and judiciary systems. Neither the churches nor the WCC seem equipped to handle these questions more than superficially.

6. The ecumenical movement needs a new kind of leadership - decentralised and distributed in different parts of the globe - not bureaucratic offices, but of praying ecumenical communities, living

and sharing in koinonia. The bureaucratic pattern does not fit, either for Church leadership, or for WCC operations. We have to make full use of our best lay leadership, both female and male, but not let loose some feverish activists furiously tearing each other and themselves apart. We need wise, loving and compassionate, knowledgeable and skilled people to lead us in this critical period of our history, people who fear God, who can pray together, who love each other, which is not the case now. The shift of leadership from bureaucracy to a global koinonia of local koinonias is an urgent need.

7. The question of culture must receive urgent and better informed attention. The present treatment does not take up the real issues: e.g. culture as identity for persons and groups, the cultural imperialism of certain cultures, the role of inter-religious co-operation and mutual understanding as a way to learn to live together in pluralistic societies and to pave the way for a united humanity, the relation of culture, not some abstract entity called “the Gospel”, but to the Kingdom of God and to ultimate reality.

8. Another important ecumenical issue is the growing alienation between the organized main line churches and their people. So many, especially among the young and the learned, are opting for a life with minimum association with the organized church. There is a new and dangerous quest for “spirituality without religion” which is replacing yesterday’s “Religionless Christianity.” A great “spiritual” egoism and an unjustifiable individualist quest for one’s own private peace and salvation lurk behind this anti-social, anti- communitarian movement. But there is some justification for people revolting against the life of the organized church. This should be a prime concern for the WCC.

9. As for the questions you have posed I have only few things to say. On relation to RCC, that is another power group with its own power game, but much more experienced in that game than the WCC. It will be good to make a study of why the WCC-RCC relationship, which started off with great hopes in 1962, became rather unproductive and formal by 1970. I believe that the power game played by one WCC official to bring down the RCC to the level of one of the Reformed churches backfired. I believe also that both Paul VI and John Paul II saw the Protestant churches as a bad

influence, undermining some of the cherished RC realities such as opposition to artificial birth control, clerical celibacy, the monastic vocation, and submission to the Magisterium. The RCC gently closed its doors to the Reformation churches around the mid-seventies or even earlier. The way the dominant Protestant leadership was treating the Orthodox churches gave some ideas to the RCC as to what would happen to them if they came inside despite their great and massive strength. Meanwhile the Reformation tradition began moving further and further away from the Apostolic heritage; this confirmed the RC desire to protect itself from such influences by keeping the doors closed as much as possible.

10. The WCC's present agenda is certainly not of the churches, but of some activists who pick up the latest fads. On important issues like the environment or the one single global market, the WCC does not do any serious research through competent and knowledgeable people, but becomes quite satisfied with a few slogans. The question of the persistence and growth of poverty and injustice in the world as well as the growth of militarism and the arms trade gets very little informed attention. The role of science and technology in shaping our world has now been pushed back to a back burner. The element of study and research in the ecumenical community as a whole does not seem to have too many advocates either on the staff or in the Committee structures. This applies across the board—Unity, Mission and Diakonia. Of course I do not quite understand the difference between Mission and Diakonia.

On the question of what alienates the Orthodox churches from the WCC, I would not put women's ordination issues at the top. It is the general lack of respect for the Apostolic Tradition, great differences in the attitudes towards the Church as a Divine - Human reality, towards the mysteries of the Church, the functional approach of the Reformation towards the Ministry, - these seem to me the basic factors, in addition to a lack of sensitivity in general to what the Orthodox regard as sacred, including the sanctification of time and of space.

These are just some ideas that come to my mind. The WCC was once a great force. It is not longer so, and the WCC better recognise

the reasons for that and do something radical about it. Otherwise not only History, but even our Lord Himself may leave it behind.

Christ is risen. God bless you both.

Yours in Christ,

APPENDIX: 5

MY OWN VISION OF THE ULTIMATE: WHY AM I AN EASTERN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN?

Why indeed am I an Orthodox Christian? Clearly, my own choice could only be part of the answer, since I come from a family whose Christian ancestry is traced, rightly or wrongly, to the Apostle St. Thomas. I belong to a church that is presumably as old as any other Christian Church in the world, except perhaps the Mother Church of Jerusalem. The Apostle Thomas, one of the Twelve, is believed to have come to India around the middle of the first century, two decades after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Thomas died in India a martyr, and was buried in Mylapore, near Madras. The eastern Orthodox Community in Kerala has come through many vicissitudes of history, mainly as a result of aggression from Western missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, but has survived to this day.

The choice was thus made for me, first by whoever was responsible for my being born in India to Christian parents and then by my parents, who decided that I should, like them and my four brothers, be baptized in the Malankara Orthodox Church as our Church is officially known. But subsequently I made that choice my own. I could have joined many other Churches, such as the Mennonite or the Presbyterian. I had the closest relations with the Mennonites when I was a college student (1950-52) at Goshen College, a Mennonite College in Indiana, USA. Or I could have joined the Presbyterian Church when I was a Bachelor of Divinity student (later converted to Master of Divinity) at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1952 to 1954. In fact most of my theological education has been in Protestant institutions (including Yale and Oxford), and my rather comprehensive exposure to Reformation thought has only helped to confirm my commitment to the apostolic tradition as maintained by the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Later, during my five-year tenure as Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, I had occasion to visit

and get to know at first hand almost all the main Churches of the Reformation and Eastern Orthodoxy, as well as to lead Bible Studies and conferences and seminars for them. Since most of the Protestant church leaders were also members of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, I got to know them personally. Even after leaving the staff of the WCC in 1967, I continued to associate myself with that body, as a member of the Central Committee, a member of the Executive Committee, and as one of its presidents from 1983 to 1991.

During these years I came to see quite clearly that the Eastern Orthodox Church had been, in many things that matter, more faithful than others to the one apostolic tradition that we all profess. I also saw when that Eastern Orthodox tradition had been unfaithful-in its excessive and sometimes exclusive authority, in its basic failure to love humanity and serve it with everything at its disposal, and in its failure to come to terms with the cultural, spiritual and intellectual struggles and frustrations of the bourgeois capitalist industrial civilization that were sweeping over global humanity. I also saw the most unchristian power struggles going on among the Eastern Orthodox, to a certain degree more deplorably so than in the Churches of the West. Despite all these lapses in practice, my respect and love for the Eastern Orthodox tradition deepened during these years.

I have also exposed myself extensively to the Roman Catholic tradition, both through personal friendships with distinguished Roman Catholics and by fairly voluminous reading. During the sixties and seventies I had close relations with the Vatican, first as a Delegated Observer at the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and later for twelve years as a founding member of the Joint Working Group of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. I knew personally Popes Paul VI and John Paul I, and likewise know the present incumbent, John Paul II. I have also worked closely with some of the leading theologians of the Roman Catholic Church, in the course of half a dozen unofficial conversations organized by the Pro Oriente Foundation in Vienna in the seventies and eighties between Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic theologians.

Other Religions

I shall presently seek to put down briefly that in my own tradition I find most valuable, but let me add a word about other religions before I get to that point. You can very well ask me the question: being born an Indian, why are you not a Hindu in religion as well?

The answer first is that at no time in history have all Indians been Hindus. That label Hindu is a very late creation (eighteenth century?), and there never was a religion specifically labelled Hinduism until a couple of centuries ago. India has always been a multi-religious pluralistic society. Even before Jaina Mahavira and the Lord Buddha in the sixth century BC, not all Indians followed the same religion. There were the Sramanas, naked mendicant monks, the Ajivikas, the Adivasis with their own comprehensively *religious* approach to reality; there were also the predecessors of what later turned out to be Tantrics, Shaivites and Vaishnavites, and of the many *bhakti* cults that arose in India from time to time. Most of these did not accept the Authority of the Vedas. The Brahmans, who came to dominate the Sanatana Dharma later, were originally newcomers, a distinct minority of immigrants from Central Asia, who later climbed to the top niche of the caste structure they created and reinforced with a thousand-year process of further small group migrations from Central Asia. In this respect Brahmanism is as foreign to the Indian tradition as any other religion. But it too was accepted and domesticated here after many quite violent struggles.

In India today we acknowledge eight great religions, four largely of Indian origin (Buddhism, Jainism, the Sanatana Dharma or the religion of the Vedas and Upanishads, and Sikhism) and four introduced from outside (Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Islam), all of West Asian origin. All these eight religions are fully Indian. Even Islam, which came in last, has been here for twelve centuries. Attempts to brand the latter four as non-Indian or 'foreign' have found supporters only among the fanatic followers of a fascist Hindutva of the Sangha Parivar variety.

If there is one thing we can surely say about India's cultural heritage, it is that that heritage has never been uniform or non-religious.

I grew up as a Christian in the midst of that heritage; I went to a school where about a third were Christians, the others following Islam or different varieties of Sanatana Dharma. As a child I was not brainwashed by Western missionary thinking forcing me to regard and condemn non-Christians as unsaved.

In fact our community developed its own myths of religious co-existence, not just tolerance for other religions that some advocate, but genuine fraternal friendship with people of other faiths. For example, in my childhood I had my Sunday School lessons in a nearby church, St. George's Orthodox Church, Karingachira. During the feast of St. George huge church processions (with the cross and white banner of the resurrection) were taken out through the streets of our town. The Vishnu Temple in my town also had similar processions with the image of Vishnu in front. There was always danger of communal clashes as the Hindu procession entered predominantly Christian areas or vice versa, since both communities were equally prone to the evils of triumphalism.

So the myth our community developed, shocking perhaps to Western Christians, held that St. George and the Lord Vishnu were blood brothers. I may not have quite believed it as a child, but it helped create the right attitude towards my Hindu brothers and sisters. Muslims were also regarded as brothers and sisters of Christians, sharing together the once honorific title of *Mapilas* or *Mahapillais* or 'great scribes.' So I grew up as a child with fraternal feelings for people of other religions. I knew something about their practices, but little about their deeper faith and understanding.

That knowledge, such as it is today, had to be developed in the forty years since 1954 when I returned from Princeton, revolting against the cultural arrogance and intellectual parochialism of Western Christianity. I began engaging in dialogues between Christians and Hindus, mostly organized by Christians. I remember particularly one in Stanley Jones's Sat Tal Ashram up in the Himalayas. There were the usual polite papers, in which each religion tried to prove that it was more right than the other, and putting on false poses of universal charity and general benignness. But the best breakthroughs came during the coffee breaks. Two I remember vividly.

One was a question and comment from a Hindu university professor. He asked me rather bluntly, "You seem to have some measure of honesty about you. Can I ask you the question: why do you Christians want to have dialogue with Hindus? You have largely failed in your fire and thunder evangelism to convert us Hindus. Is not dialogue your new technique to get our ear, so that you can try to convert us in a devious way?" Unfortunately most of the Protestant and Roman Catholic literature on dialogue seems to give ground for the Hindu friend's suspicion of Christian motives in dialogue.

I decided that day that I would accept two principles for Christian dialogue with people of other faiths. The first was the principle of maximum transparency. Christians should have no hidden motives or dialogue with people of other faiths. They are all people whom Christ loves and for whom He gave His life. I decided that the love of Christ for all humanity must be the propelling motive for dialogue, though other motives such as the affirmation of, and concern for, the unity of humanity, and the need for pluralistic but harmonious local, national and global communities could be a subsidiary motive. But no hidden motive to convert the other. The second principle was that in inter-religious dialogue no religion should claim any superiority. In dialogue all are on the same plane, respectfully listening to and learning from each other. You may be convinced that your religion is the only true one. But do not make any claims of superiority over others on that ground. We are all equally contingent and dependent on God's grace and mercy, whether we be Hindus, Christians or Muslims, whether some of us acknowledge that grace and mercy or not.

I spoke above about Christ's love for all humanity. In that connection I must narrate another coffee-break experience in dialogue. Again it was a Hindu friend who engaged me in one-to-one dialogue. 'You seem to be tough enough to take this,' his preamble immediately put me on guard. "I want to tell you what images go through my Hindu mind, when you Christians talk to us about your "Christian love" for Hindus. I visualize a giant spider, oozing out from the pores of its skin quantities of goeey fluid, called Christian love, and skilfully weaving a glorious web in which it wants to catch me, an unsuspecting Hindu fly.' I was shocked, but kept my cool, for I

knew he had justification for the allegation. The Christian love, which came out in the form of charity or of useful social institutions such as hospitals, schools and orphanages, was still governed by the motives of 'witnessing to Christ' and of making Christianity attractive. It may be unfair to regard all Christian social work as an advertisement for the gospel, but non-Christians do see it that way much too frequently.

It was only in about 1967, when I left the staff of the WCC in Geneva and returned to my country and church, that I began taking up the issue of dialogue with people of other faiths more seriously. I saw the damage done to the image and reality of the Christian Church by the unchristian attitude towards other religions fostered by reformed thinkers such as Barth, Brunner and Kraemer. They were speaking out of their cultural parochialism rather than from any genuine Christian insight, it seemed to me.

One of the first achievements was the setting up of a sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Other Faiths in the WCC. We were able to secure the services of a first-rate Indian Christian, Dr. Stanley Samartha, to head that unit. He did a masterful job. Despite the strong inhibitions of a culturally narrow-minded European Church, we were able to organize several small significant interfaith consultations, which laid down some of the rules and principles for fair and honest interreligious dialogue. We also ventured into the experience of praying meaningfully with people of other religions in the course of these seminars and consultations. This caused a lot of furore in European Christian circles, and I remember how a friend of mine, a German professor, the late Dr. Margull, almost lost his chair in the university, on the charge that he, a Christian, had participated in the prayer services of Muslims. But we kept plugging away quietly, until it all came to a head in the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1975, in Nairobi, Kenya.

Some of us presumed, especially in the Dialogue Working Group of the WCC, that the time was ripe to test the claim of Dietrich Bonhoeffer that Christianity, especially European Christianity, had come of age. At the Nairobi Assembly of 1975, we invited a select number of observers from the great religions of the world and devoted

a whole section of the Assembly to interreligious dialogue, in the hope that along with the environmental issue being highlighted at Nairobi, the issue of cultural pluralism and interreligious dialogue would move from the margins of the WCC agenda to its centre. I was asked to chair that section on dialogue, with our distinguished non-Christian friends present.

Our hopes were soon to be dashed on the hard rocks of European cultural parochialism. In response to my presidential remarks, a friend of mine, a Norwegian Lutheran bishop, asked me, 'in what sense does the Chairman find the revelation in Jesus Christ so insufficient that he has to go the non-Christians to learn the truth?'

I was offended, but being in the chair, could not retort in my usual rude manner. so I responded, 'In this sense that the Chairman is not as fortunate as his friend the bishop from Norway, who seems to have so mastered the revelation in Jesus Christ, that he is so totally self-satisfied and does not feel any need to learn from others.' I doubt that the barb got through. But my non-Christian friends saw for themselves the shameful narrow mindedness of European Christianity. They were hurt. But kept their cool and continued to be polite.

The Assembly decided that the WCC was not to engage in any more multi-religious dialogue, but to stick with bilateral dialogues in which Christians kept the control. The Nairobi Assembly disillusioned me, and I came to the conclusion that neither forms of Western Christianity, Roman Catholic or Protestant, were mature enough to engage in dialogue Christians could not control and manipulate. I am not claiming that Eastern Orthodox Christianity is more mature or more open in this regard. In fact it is only in contrast with the dry scholasticism and exclusivistic dogmatism of Eastern Orthodoxy that we can see Western Christianity in a better light.

A Crisis of Confidence

Anyway, the process was begun by which I lost confidence in the leadership of the Western Church - Protestant, Roman Catholic or Sectarian. And my own Eastern Orthodoxy was lost on the margins of humanity, quixotically and uncomprehendingly struggling against

many hostile forces on all sides - Islam in the Middle East, aggressive Roman Catholic, Protestant and Sectarian proselytizing missions everywhere, atheist communism in Eastern and Central Europe, and liberal secularism reaching out globally with its bloodsucking tentacles. Eastern Orthodoxy developed a barricade psychology of self-defence by sheer negativity, smug in its pettiness, making tall claims about its monopoly on Christian truth, and yet unable to communicate with either the modern world or even with its own youth and laity (including the alienated Orthodox women).

In 1983 the Vancouver Assembly had chosen me to be one of its presidents, a desperate move on the part of the WCC establishment to keep me out of power in its policy making and running. A president of the WCC is always a decorative figure, supposed to represent the WCC on unimportant public occasions, a senior figure who generally keeps out of all controversy. I was the only legitimate candidate to be moderator of the Central Committee, since no one from the Orthodox tradition had been allowed to be general secretary or moderator up till that time, and only the general secretary's post is more powerful than that of the moderator.

I was aware of the antics of power brokering behind the scenes in Vancouver. Philip Potter had been general secretary for some time, and he wanted only a docile and malleable moderator. He chose a Scottish schoolmaster, with neither knowledge of the world church nor the basic theological competence needed, as his candidate for moderator. He told me, with a measure of defiance shining through his eyes, that that was his choice and that he was going to get him elected, in the teeth of all opposition. He also announced to me that my name was being proposed as one of the presidents. I tried to advise him that he was unlikely to get his candidate for moderator elected. He told me that he would 'show me.' He also wanted his confidant and adviser, Deputy general Secretary Professor Konrad Raiser of Germany, to be his own successor as general secretary when his term ended in a year or so.

It was one of those rare occasions in the WCC when I entered the fray of power brokering. I thought it would be disastrous for the

WCC to have the power combination of Potter, Raiser and the Scottish schoolmaster. The Orthodox would feel left out totally. So I acted. And it worked. The Central Committee rejected the general secretary's proposal, and by a muddled process chose the German Praeses Joachim Held as moderator. That dashed to the ground Konrad Raiser's chances for the succession, at least for the time being, since a German moderator and a German general secretary was an unacceptable combination.

With that I became cynical of the WCC as a 'privileged instrument' of the ecumenical movement. There seemed to be more dirty politics in that Christian body than in most nation-states. I served as president until the Canberra Assembly in 1991, but I was systematically kept out of all important decision making, and was seldom allowed to represent the WCC at any important public function. Whenever I announced that I was going to do something on my own, not as president, the establishment grew fearful and tried to stop or circumvent me. When I announced for example that I was going to Managua for the sixth anniversary of Nicaragua's liberation, they decided to send two more presidents and additional persons to hedge me. They were afraid I would say something inappropriate in favour of the Sandinistas.

I did in Managua what I thought was right. In the first place I went to the place where Foreign Minister d'Escotto was fasting in protest against the American threat of aggression and sanctions. I spent a day with him, fasting in sympathy. I saw President Daniel Ortega, and asked him very politely why the Sandinistas had been so racist and mean in their treatment of the Misquito Indians. I still remember Ortega standing up from his presidential chair, and with bowed head saying to me, 'I confess before God and before you that the Sandinistas did wrong. We are doing everything possible to recompense the Misquitos.'

I went to other Central American countries such as El Salvador and the Dominican Republic and visited the people who were being tortured and massacred by powerful pro-US fascist forces. I made a firsthand report on what I saw to the Central Committee meeting in Argentina, and the resolution on Central America was approved

without any discussion, partly because of the heavy emotional impact of my report.

I was very grieved that the progressive Latin American Christians, who deplored the oppression in Central America, were not aware of what they themselves had done to the original natives of that continent. Even the so-called liberation theologians are still today unable to establish rapport with the indigenous people whom they have uprooted and decultured.

The net result of my rather extensive ecumenical experience is that I have not been able to spot one Christian Church in the world that is even half faithful to the way of the cross and to the teaching of the Apostles. I have gradually begun to look outside the Christian Church, to see what God is doing.

I see the demand for full manifestation of the freedom and dignity of all human beings - men, women and children - as a major thrust still in the march of history. I see the interreligious movement and the women's movement as significant aspects of the advance of human history. I can conceive of the peace movement with a socialist commitment as bound to come back soon into the centre of things, as the contradictions in the single market global economy begin to reveal themselves more manifestly, quite possibly leading to a world-wide economic crash. Above all I am convinced that until humanity sees that the secular civilization, which denies the centrality of God, has been the greatest mistake in our history, it cannot find the way forward.

I see that I cannot put my trust either in Christian Church activities, or in the work of governments and intergovernmental agencies such as the UN, to begin to lead humanity in the way it has to go. That leadership has to come from groups of committed people of all religions and of no professed religion, in all countries and on all continents, working to enlighten the awareness of people and mobilize their power to act in the best interests of humanity.

My Vision - My Faith

Let me now conclude with a confession of my faith and a brief reference to the vision that impels me, even in my seventythird year.

I know that the created order is in the hands of God. He brought it into being out of nothingness. It is His will that still maintains it in existence. And that will is good. There is no trace of evil in it. So I shall not be daunted by evil, or be stymied by fear of evil. The good is true; it alone is true and everything else must find dissolution in its own time.

I belong to that created order, but am by no means the centre of it; everything else and everyone else shares in the destiny of creation, which is good. But the separation of good from evil causes not only both joy and peace, but also pain and suffering. That separation happens throughout history, but it will take place in a special way at the 'harvest' -the final consummation and summing up of all history, which happens beyond history.

The created order came into being through the Son; he became the Son of Humanity, part of our human destiny and the destiny of the created order, sharing our kind of peace and joy, and also our kind of pain and suffering. Him I adore; Him I love; He is neither male nor female, though I use the male personal pronoun, since we are yet to create a common personal pronoun in the English language. His I am, and that is my fulfilment. I trust in Him; He is my hope, my compass and my anchor. He is the destiny of the created order.

I need to learn from all, and have indeed learned from many. My major liberation in life has been from thinking that the Western way of thinking, with its specific categories and modalities, is the only way to think and to know. Now that I know a little bit about the Yin-Yang polarity-complementarity way of thinking and knowing in the Chinese Tao, I do not have to be a slave of the Western subject-object mode of thinking, and the logic of the excluded middle. From my own Indian tradition I have learned the principle of *Ekam advitiyam* or One without a Second; I know now that all diversity and difference ultimately find their unity in the One without a Second; that One is more ultimate than the many. My own Eastern Orthodox tradition has confirmed that there is no creation other than God or outside God, because the Infinite Ultimate has neither outside nor other.

I have learned from the Jains the great *Anekantavada*, which holds that all statements are conditional and qualified truth, which have to be supplemented and completed by other truths; that our Ahimsa or non-violence should extend to other ways of thinking, and not just to other beings.

I have learned from Buddhists that all epistemology is finally without basis; that our perceptions of all things, including the world, are but mental events that happen when our kind of mind-sense and whatever is out there come into contact with each other; that this world which the secular mindset takes to be some kind of ultimate reality is neither real nor unreal, and should be taken seriously, but not so absolutely.

And I have learned much from Jews and Arabs, from Sikhs and Zoroastrians, from Adivasis and Aborigines, from Africans and from the indigenous peoples of America. And I hope I am still learning and will continue to do so until the end.

I have also learned a lot from the communists-that most avowedly atheistic wing of the European Enlightenment; I have learned from their weaknesses and failures just as much as from their apparent successes. I cultivated them especially for two reasons: (a) their social goals were more compatible with the Christian idea of a just society than that of liberalism and its capitalist ideology; (b) my Christian brothers and sisters in the West, especially the Roman Catholic Church, but also Protestants, were vilifying everything the communists were doing. I found anticommunism anti-Christian, and therefore decided to associate and work with the communists so long as they were committed to just societies in which oppression and exploitation was reduced to a minimum and in which all human beings could live with freedom and dignity.

Alas, the communists became as dogmatic, corrupt and power hungry as the Roman Catholic Church and dug their own graves. But I still remain committed to socialism as the nearest alternative to the society I am envisaging as a Christian.

And I have learned much from the Eastern Orthodox heritage: that Eucharistic worship and adoration with thanks giving are the primary responses to what God has done in Christ-not preaching or

witnessing; that the Christian life in the community is more important than Christian talking and doing; that the Christian's personal life is not an individual matter, but the work of the Holy Spirit in the community of faith; that the Holy Spirit of God has been at work in the whole creation from its very inception, and is still at work, not just in the Church, but in the whole universe, bringing it to fulfilment according to God's plans; that I can trust the True God to fulfil the created order according to His plans, despite many apparent failures and regressions I am privileged to be initiated, by baptism-chrismation, into the great mystery of the universe as God guides it to its destiny.

The vision that beckons defies human word and concept. The mind cannot envision what God has set in store for creation. The destiny is good without mitigation, pure joy in love, peace in community with all, ecstasy without triumph sweeter than anything our mind and senses can now enjoy. The human mind can neither conceive of nor imagine what God has set in store for us and for all creation. Our fantasy and our imagination cannot soar so high. Even when we finally experience it, it will be beyond all language and concept.

It is the Spirit that assures me of this. And the Spirit leads me there. That Spirit, we have a foretaste. The reality will surpass all present hope and human expectation.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one true God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Martin Forward (ed.), *Ultimate Visions: Reflections on the Religions We Choose*, Oxford, One World Publications, 1995, pp. 111-120)

APPENDIX: 6

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

NEW DELHI, APRIL 1, 1993

Six years ago, when I last wrote a Testament of this kind sitting in my study at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study in Shimla. I did not expect to live for another six years. God has been good, and I must go on in this valley of tears as long as He wants me to. I must go when I am called, now or later. I am now in the seventyfirst year of my life.

I leave this humble testimony to the world at large, to those who may come across it in any manner, anywhere.

God is good. He alone is truly and fully good. He is good without mixture of evil; in Him all evils disappears. Evil has no place in Him, just as darkness has no place in the Light. He can do no evil. Evil does not come from Him. He did not make it. He gave freedom to His Creation; freedom to reject the good with which it is endowed, and thereby to choose evil. Evil is denial of created being itself, which cannot really be without being also good. In freedom is the root of evil. But evil by itself cannot be; it cannot exist, except when mixed with the good. Only the good can be. Being and the good are inseparable. When any being uses its freedom to deny and reject the good, it denies also being itself, for true created being is always good, like its creator.

If you ask me, "Who is this God, and where do we find Him?," I can only say with all who have known God, that there is no way we can grasp Him with our concepts or express His being with our words. We can say many things about Him in a negative or metaphorical language. He is without form or body, without beginning or end, without limit or extension, neither in space nor in time, not needing to become or grow into something he is not, and therefore without change or movement, not dependent on or derived from anything else, everything else being derived from and dependent on Him. Who and where are not questions appropriate for the One who is Eternal and Infinite. Where He is not, there is only nothing.

I am unhappy about using the masculine personal pronoun to refer to Him; God is not male, but using the feminine personal pronoun solves no problem, for he is neither male nor female, nor is He a neuter It. The Creator has no gender, which is an attribute only of the created order. He is Who He is, Who will always be, the Great I am. My human language offers me no appropriate pronoun by which to refer to Him. I will continue to say 'He' without thereby meaning that He is male.

From Him comes all good. All that is good not only comes from Him, but is also His presence. Where the good is, there God is present. I bow before the good, Wherever it shows up—in people of different faiths and religions, in people Who claim to believe in no God, in birds and animals, in trees and flowers, in mountains and rivers, in air and sky, in sun and moon, in sculpture and painting, in music and art, in the smile of the infant and in the wisdom of the sage, in the blush of dawn and in the gorgeous sunset. Where the good is, there is the kingdom of God. There God is present and reigns even when that presence is not acknowledged or recognised, though the Kingdom belongs in a special sense to those Who have known Him and worship Him, dedicating their lives to total obedience.

If you ask me how is the good to be defined, I can only say that good, like God, is undefinable. But it can be discerned, recognised, praised and cherished, just as God can be. Good is what God is. He has been good to me. Out of nothing He has brought me forth. He keeps me From going back to the nothing that I have come from. He forgives me my sin and evil. The evil in me draws forth a sentence of death, but he annuls that sentence by His grace. The life that I live I regard as a double gift—the gift of existence and the gift of the new life that makes me a child of God. For He has come to us in His Son, and has become one of us, a human being in the created order, partaking of the earth, of flesh and blood, of matter in all its temporality and finitude. On that I have no doubt, even though many of the people whom I love and admire reject that faith of mine. I belong to Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God, and therefore to His new humanity, without any reservation. I cannot compromise that faith even for the sake of good relations with people of other faiths.

In Him I put my trust. Christ is my all. Without him I am nothing at all. The life I live is Christ's. I share that life with all those in Christ's Body. I have no life of my own. I live in Him and He lives in me. Christ never forsakes me, even when I am rebellious, indifferent or thoughtless in my disobedience. His love stays steadfast even when my loyalty grows feeble and my ardor becomes tepid. He gives and He forgives, without stint or limit. Such love deserves nothing less than my all. Him I adore, Him I worship as God and Man, Him I hold as without peer, the only Begotten of God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One True God.

And Christ's love is for all huankind, not just for Christians. It is for the whole of humanity that he has died, not just for Christians alone. He lives for the human race, and he is the lover and Saviour, as well as Lord, of the whole race of humankind. How can I then draw any limits to my love and compassion, or deny it to any group of human beings? Even those who regard themselves as my enemies I am not to hate or exclude from Christ's love and compassion. That has been the basis for my approach to all sorts of groups, people of other religions, Communists, Moonies, and especially the white races against whom I can justly hold a thousand grudges.

Christ is for me much more than a great teacher of humanity, along with Gautama Buddha, Vardhamana Mahavira, Lao Tse, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammed Rasool-Allah, Adi Sankara, Plato, Socrates, Moses, and Zoroaster. Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God who became son of Man, took on our sin and suffering upon himself, sacrificed himself on the Cross, died and rose again from the dead to live for ever and to reconcile the whole creation to God in himself. He is the victor over sin and death, over evil and disintegration. In him everything holds together, and in him shall the whole creation, purged of all evil, be finally harmonised. This I believe, and I have no reason to hide my faith, though I do not talk about it all the time. I live by this faith. This is the source-spring of my actions. This is the hope that keeps me from despair and despondency, even when everything looks so bleak and gloomy in God's world.

Krankenhaus St. Josef, Wuppertal, Germany, June 5, 1993.

I have just come through another test, as I continue the writing of this testimony, with my left side paralysed, here in room 341 of Krankenhaus Sankt Josef in Wupperta-Elberfeld, near Cologne, Germany. Today is the 5th of June 1993. I had the stroke exactly a week ago, on May 29th, on my way from Oxford to Cologne. I came here to the hospital directly from Cologne airport. Today I can type with one hand. God has been good to me and has begun to heal me miraculously. He could have done it all at once, if He wanted to. He tells me that my faith is not strong enough for such immediate recovery. But He is healing me miraculously fast.

During this test, which may last a long time, I have come to know afresh both how fragile one's hold upon ordinary biological life is, and also how unshakeable is the foundation of the new life which God bestows by His grace. Death is no terror. Even the prospect of being a permanent (that is, till the end of this biological life) invalid holds no terror for me, if that is what God wills. Whatever happens, He can turn it in to the good.

I leave this word to all who survive me: Love God with all your mind and all your will and all your feeling and all your strength. Live for the good of others. Pursue not perishable gold or wordly glory. Wish no one any evil. Bless God in your heart, and bless all his creation. Discipline yourself while still young, to love God and to love His creation, to serve others and not to seek one's own interest. Pray always that God's Kingdom may come and all evil be banished from this created order.

Finally I have a personal request to make to my church. Naked I came forth in to this world from my mother's womb, and naked I go forth from the womb of this world, to that world where my Loving Lord awaits me. All who love me please pray for me. I shall be grateful if my mortal remains are interred in the Orthodox Seminary Chapel, Kottayam where there will be perpetual prayer for the soul of this sinner. May God bless you all.

Completed as from the Delhi Orthodox Centre, 2 Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 062, India, at the Kurklinik Bad

Laasphe, Am Bergchen 10, D-57324 Bad Laasphe, Germany, on this the Eleventh day of July Nineteen Hundred and Ninetythree by Paulos Mar Gregorios, by the grace of God Metropolitan of Delhi.

Signature

Witnesses

DR. PAULOS MAR GREGORIOS
Metropolitan of Delhi
Ex-President, World Council of Churches



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6474975

My dear Joice

God bless you.

I have no time to write

a long piece.

I hope the enclosed is
useful. Bhashaposhini has decided to
feature my thought. I have to write
something for them also.

Sincerely

Paulos Gregorios

Mr Joice Thottakkad
Bethel Publications
Pariyaram PO
KOTTAYAM 686 021

Please send me 12 copies
of the book (with my piece) and bill me to
Delhi

fdgt

Letters of
Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios

1

My Dear Doc,

Greetings in His name. I am so sorry to hear that you have not received my previous letter. It was sent through K. in a cover addressed to Mr. Philip. So he has betrayed me. It does'nt matter. I had written only the truth in it.

I had written the details of what he has been trying to do here. I am sure Miss Gundesen has already written to you all about it. May be, she has written to you about the results of our meeting too. He came down from Addis last week, with the Veterinary Doctor, since we had sent him a telegram that the cows were sick. Mr. Stokland asked for a meeting, and Miss Gundesena and I and Degefe attended. In the beginning K's attitude was that Mr. Stokland had no right to call this meeting, since he thought what he had done was one of his administrative duties and that it did not affect us in any way. When we forcefully brought home to him that he had insulted us by going over our backs and asking the boys not to come to our houses, he was convinced and said that it was his 'mistake' and that he was sorry about it. He begged our pardons, but we feel that he did it just because he had to. We asked for an assurance that this will not happen again, which he readily gave us.

I asked him what right he had to stop my boys from coming to my house or any body else going to anybody else's home for that matter. He repeated his old story that there is public opinion that this was a religious school, and that he had to combat it. He told us how some of the Tillik Sows of the place told him that all his schools were religious schools, and he denied it, without any result whatsoever. He personally believed that there was no religious education being given in the compound and thought that the whole thing was due to the stupidity of the public! He said that he only wanted to change the wrong impression prevalent among the public, and that therefore he thought it necessary to stop all kinds of meetings in the teachers' houses.

I told him that I was an Orthodox Christian and that nobody could prohibit me from teaching the Bible to the boys. I felt that Miss

Gundesen also was not teaching any religion, but only the Bible, but that if he thought it inadvisable he could stop it, but not my class. He replied that this had nothing to do with religion and that it was only a matter of public opinion. He said that he personally had respect for all religions, including the stone-worshippers. I then had to tell him that I thought all this was due to the simple fact that he did not like the Bible. He said that he had studied the Bible, fullstop, semicolon and all, and that everything was in his head. He said that he himself liked to teach the Bible and that we were free to teach to in the class rooms during the morals periods. Mr. Stokland intervened to say that he thought that K was an enemy of the Bible and Christ. He put his hands over his ears as if we were speaking sacrilege. In any case he did not budge from his point, but said that this was not only in Jimma, but all over the province that the Bible classes had to be stopped. He said that he would keep his ears open to see what the public said, and that if they did not change their impressions, we could restart the classes; but the man added the words, Then we asked him if this was his own doing, or if he had orders from Addis. He said he was responsible for the province and did not need any orders to do things like this.

The point is this now, Sir, I am asking you to do me a favour, the second time I ask for one. You know that I belong to the Orthodox faith (The Syrian Church of Malabar), which is the same as the Ethiopian Church in every matter of faith. Only the rituals are different. His Majesty knows about my church. I have heard that H.I.M. has received communion from one of our Bishops when he came to this country many years ago. So please seek an interview with him about and me, that I am desirous of opening a Sunday School in this compound. I will see that only things which are not against the Orthodox faith will be taught by me. Explain to him about most of the boys being orphans. Who can be potential crooks if they are not given the required moral education. I can give references about myself from one of our Bishops back home. In Addis Mr. Hafiz Dawood or Mr. Dmitri will be able to speak for me. I know the trend of things in this country, and how difficult a thing I am asking you to do. I know that I myself am taking quite a risk, but I am not anxious about myself, so long as what I do is to the glory of His name.

I would request that your opinion about me and about my character should not stand in the way. It is an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances that has made you misunderstand me in more than one respect. I don't say that I have always been what I now am. But still, I have never been as bad as you may perhaps think. That does'nt matter in this case.

I will be looking forward with anxiety to your reply. If you think it advisable that I should have an interview with H.I.M., I will be glad to come and do that. I am grateful to you for all that you have done in the past. Do pray over this request of mine, and do what He lays on your heart to do.

My sincere wishes to you for a Blessed and Fruitful New Year. May He help you to overcome your weaknesses and lead you from Victory to Victory.

Yours in Him

T. P. Verghese

2

My Dear Ato Kirubel,

I am very sorry to leave Jimma, without saying good-bye to you.

I hope you have had a good trip down south, and that you are in good health.

I wish to make use of this opportunity, to express my gratitude to you for co-operating with me in official matters, though we have had our own little personal differences.

I am enclosing herewith the list of medicines to be bought for our clinic.

I am very sorry to leave this school. I am sure you will get some better man in myplace.

The Lord God will bless you if only you will turn your heart to him. I need not tell you this, because you know it better than I do. However I request you as a friend to turn to Him and try to please Him rather than to please men.

I will be praying for you. Hope to see you before I leave Addis. My best wishes to you.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

T. P. Verghese

3

TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SELASSIE I, EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA

May it please Your Imperial Majesty,

Your Imperial Majesty's Most Loyal Obedient Servant, T. P. Verghese, Indian Teacher, Ministry of Education, Imperial Government of Ethiopia, begs leave to submit

That he is one of the first group of Indian Teachers who came to Ethiopia in November 1947,

That he has been working at Nazareth School for about ten months and at the practical Arts School, Jimma for the last five months,

That his work and conduct have been satisfactory as can be seen from the reports about him in the Shoa provincial office Records, or as can be testified by Ato Ephraim Borrou and Dr. R. N. Thompson,

That as a Christian Teacher belonging to the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church of South India, he thought it his duty to help the students of his school in Bible Instruction on a voluntary basis, when the students came to his house for such purpose,

That the Director of Education of Kaffa province prohibited such classes in his home, by his letter No. 488/4/U dated 16th Tahsas 1941, and that the classes had therefore to be discontinued,

That he had to reply to the letter of the provincial Director, setting forth his claims to conduct such classes, and showing that the provincial Officer had no right to stop these classes,

That the Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa, in their letter No. 3954/2263 dated 27th Tir 1941 asked him to come over to Addis

Ababa with all his things and report to the ministry of education Office,

That he did so on Yekatit 8th, but has not received any orders or had any hearing till now,

That he now understands that there is a likelihood of his being deported from this country with at being given a hearing,

That he feels he has done nothing wrong or against the laws of this country, and therefore

THAT HE APPEALS TO YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY, as minister of Education and as the Protector of the just, that Your Imperial Majesty will look into his case and see that justice is done to your Imperial Majesty's Most Loyal and Obedient Servant,

T. P. Verghese

Addis Ababa,
23rd February 1949

4

My Dear Lonanpillai,

I was very glad to hear from You. It was a very interesting letter. I am very proud of you. The sentiments expressed there in are so noble.

You say that you did not see anything new in my letter. Well, I was not trying to teach you, but only trying to bring a few things to your remembrance. My arguments were baseless and groundless, you say. The point is that I did not argue in that last letter of mine. You want to take your own angle of view. I concede your right to do it. I will concede it to every young man who has a fundamental knowledge of men and things. But I do not concede your right to ignore other peoples' points of view. I am prepared to view things from your point of view. I am a student of Marx and Lenin. I know of a few things about communism and Marxism. I have not been initiated into your inner sancta, but yet I have a working knowledge of your ideals and methods. I see your view-point.

Now here is my challenge, little brother. I ask you to explain your faith. Are you prepared to see my point of view? Then answer the following questions. I will tell you what I believe on the same topics and tell you why.

1. Do you believe in the existence of God, Personal or impersonal?

2. Do you believe in the personality of God? if not, why not?

3. What do you believe of the nature of God?

4. Do you believe that God controls and directs this universe?

5. What do you think about man? Is he endowed with the powers to acquire infinite knowledge by his own efforts. Is there a limit to the knowledge that a man can acquire? Who do you think was the man with the highest amount of knowledge?

6. What do you think about the origin of man? Was he created, or was he evolved from lower forms?

7. What do you believe about the origin of life on this universe? What do you believe on the origin of matter?

8. Do you believe in State Capitalism? Define your ideal society.

9. Define happiness. What do you want humanity to have, freedom from want, or happiness?

10. Do you think man should have freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, freedom of faith and worship, and above all freedom from fear and tyranny?

Please pardon for apparently trying to make you appear for an examination. I am a teacher (in fact, a college professor) and therefore love to ask questions and correct answers. Now if you can give me the answer to the above questions, I shall be able to know what your fundamental points of view are. Then we can agree on certain fundamentals and proceed with our mutual assistance to seek the truth. I donot say that I refuse to be convinced of the truth of your thinking. If you can convince me I am prepared to change my views. I am prepared to accept your angle of view and think with you. If

you can show me that Soviet Communism is the way for the salvation of the world, the next letter will contain an application for membership in the communist party, and for contain an application for membership in the communist party, and for appointment as a worker. Hope you will not fail to send me the answers, clear and detailed, to the above questions. If you prefer to write in malayalam, I guess I can understand it. One of the chief reasons for my writing in English is the fact that I can type faster than I can write with pen. Hope you will excuse my using a bourgeoisie language. It happens to be the language of the world today.

Yes, you are old enough. But, take it from me, not old enough to judge for yourself. You are old enough to think for yourself. You do not need anyone to think for you any longer. But Just because you have read a number of books, do not think that you can judge everything. It is not mere reading that makes a man. Maturity of brain is one of the fundamental requisites. You are too young to acquire maturity of thought. It needs experience. You must go through pleasures and pains, hunger and satiety, richness and poverty, suffering and satisfaction, success and failure, health and disease, and all kinds of circumstances in life to be able to think clearly for yourself. I have gone through most, and in this 27 years of my age, have accumulated more experience than any man of 40. Excuse a little boasting. It is only my intellectual snobbery, which is extremely bourgeois too. Still, I am humble enough to admit that my thinking is not yet as clear as I would like it to be. When I read such a profound book as *Das Kapital*, or some of Lenin's writings, I have often to read a sentence three times before I can understand it. I agree in essence with *Das Kapital*. I agree that the capitalist is the greatest potential danger to any country. I agree to that the surplus value made by the capitalist out of the labour-power of other human beings, does not rightfully belong to him. But I do not agree with state capitalism. I am for state-controlled private enterprise. I know that today's state in the so-called democratic nations is all on the part of the moneybags, and is an enemy of the labourer. But state capitalism is not the solution, because without private enterprise, without individual effort, all the higher values of humanity are likely to perish. This is one of the facts over-

looked by Marx, Engels and Lenin, for all three of whom I have the profoundest respect as great thinkers. Stalin, I do not care for. He is just an ambitious monarch destined for ruin within three years. He is not sincere or faithful. There is a solution for this Capital Labour problem. If you want my views on the subject, you can look into the Orient Illustrated Weekly of Nov. 16, 1947, where in you will find an article entitled The Human Approach to Labour Problems, by Paul Vergis. A better understanding between the Capitalist and the Labourer, the fixing of the use-value of labour not with relation to its exchange-value, but to its utility value and labour-power-value is what I advocate. That will be the solution to the problems of today. Perhaps you will remember that I was the Asst. Secretary of a Trade Union (*of course bourgeois*) and so I was very much interested in Labour Problems. I am still a labourer, and am on the side of labour. So my views differ from yours only in respect of the methods used to solve the problem. You advocate a method which has been tried in a vast country, and proved such a failure that its owners are so ashamed of it that they dare not show it to visitors from outside. I advocate a method which I consider to be the best, because it is one which will not cost anything if it fails, and will be the best if it works. For that also a struggle is necessary, but not of the animal kind, not the butcher kind, not the destructive type. Well, we will continue our discussion about, methods later.

You will pardon a smile, When I hear you say that you were a Christian in your boyhood, and that you used to argue about it with your heathen friends. I tell you once again that if once you have become a Christian, It is physically impossible to be anything else. We would differ in our definitions of a Christian. You would say that any one who has been baptised is a Christian. Our church does not teach that. The Bible does not teach that. If at least a few of our Bishops and our Priests were Christians, sincere young men like you would not have left the Way of Life and follow the Cursed Path. What a corrupt and useless clergy we have! we cannot accuse the laymen for anything. All the fault lies on our clergy. The Lord says in the Bible, "Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion underfoot, they have made my pleasant portion a

desolate wilderness.” That is what the pastors have done. Whether it be Catholic, Orthodox, or protestant, they have all gone the way of the world, and forgotten the high priest, the Lord Jesus. If the Lord Jesus were to come to the world today. He would make our a whip, and use it in our priests, saying, “Get out hence; make not my Father’s House a house of merchandise, or a den of thieves.”

You have not had, a warm, loving, personal contact with the Lord Jesus. If you had, you would not have left him, to go with the prostitute Soviet Communism. If you think that the pleasures of heaven are the purpose of Christianity, then you are mistaken. Christianity is a way of life in this world, as well as for the world to come. You try to tell me that you tried to convince your heathen friends about Christianity, and that you were convinced by what they said to you. What a poor knowledge of Christianity you must have had! You are not Christian. Just because your parents are Christians. Christianity is not a family religion. It is a religion of the individual until you accept Christ as you personal Saviour, you are not a Christian. The Lord Jesus says, “Not every man that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father in Heaven.” So you never were a Christian. You can be if you like to. The Grace of God is free. You are welcome to accept it.

So you reverted to Logic and book knowledge to find Truth. Very good. What are books? The storehouses of man’s knowlegde. What is man’s knowledge? The result of his experiments. What are his experiments? His successes and failures. Is it perfect? What does man know about a cold? Can he cure it? What does he know about electricity? He plays so much with it. It is his chief servant. But how does it pass through a piece of wire, or even through the air? He does’nt understand. He admits his limitations. Logic. What is Logic? The Science of finding out arguments to prove something about which you have already fixed some ideas in your mind. Is there anyone who has been able to detach himself completely from previously acquired knowledge, and take a cent percent deferential view of things. Practically impossible. All logic is a fallacy. I think it was Voltaire who listened to a heated argument in favour of the mechanical concept of life, and said, “I agree perfectly with you, but I agree per-

fectly with the opposite view also, because logic proves both.” Logic is the most subtle science. It is full of the most delicate fallacies. Human knowledge and Logic are the two most miserably fallible things on earth. Science is just classified knowledge. I am a student of Science and believe in most of what most scientists say.

But the fact remains that a person who devotes his whole time to the study of one or two sciences, will have the experience of the blind man who went to see the elephant. Each thought that what he felt was the whole elephant, whereas it was either the ear, or one leg, or the tusk, or the trunk or the tail alone that he really felt. If you are a communist, then you must have made a good study of Economics, because I am sure an intelligent boy like you will not jump into a party without a certain amount of study. The Science of Economics, is one of the most imperfect, and is full of problems that still remain unsolved. The difficulty lies in the general notion that money is all that there is in the world. The human heart, and the human soul are the greatest things in the world, and any economy which ignores these two is bound to be a failure in the long run. The Bolshevist economy has to destroy Conscience and Free thinking in order to exist, and hence cannot exist but under a dictatorship. That is why communism has to destroy religion.

If you want to have a comprehensive view of life, you must come to Philosophy, the Empress of the Sciences. There dabble with Plato, and Aristotle, Socrates and Marcus Aurelius, Bacon and Spinoza, Voltaire and Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and even Spencer and Bertrand Russell. There you come face to face with abstract Metaphysics, and begin to see that there is more in life than appears on the surface. There you try to go into the ultimate reality of life and existence and matter and space and time and eternity, and find yourself baffled everywhere. There you find the comprehensive view of all the sciences and laws, and bow down before the mighty ignorance of the human mind. When you have made a thorough study of philosophy, then you are prepared to begin your search of Truth. The elusive reality comes into Silhouette. There Philosophy ends and Religion begins. All your struggles through the years is amply rewarded by the vision that is in the horizon. You make that vision your

aim in life, and life seems to be meaningful then. You find the great Plans of the Eternal Lawgiver being gradually unfolded, and you bow down once again, this time before something worth the reverence. If you really want to see the truth, begin a study of philosophy. Study fearlessly, the Godless Nietzsche, and the Agnostic Spinoza, and Voltaire the father of doubts. You would not come back very much enlightened about the ultimate realities, but still you get the most comprehensive view of human knowledge.

You have been telling me about the “Numerous evils it has presented to the present society.” I would like to know what evils true Christianity has brought to the human society.

It is only change for the better that will improve things. Give me five evils out of the numerous, and I shall be satisfied. You state that if Religion is not cut out, It will ruin the whole society. Tell me how.

Do you accuse me of standing in the way of changes? I am for a root and branch change. I am not a day-dreamer to believe that the present set-up of society is the best. I am for change. But change will not improve matters. It is only change for the better that will improve things. What evils true Christianity, has brought to the human Society. It is only change for the better that will improve things. It is wonderful to hear from you, that “Our Holy Bible confirms that changes were the essential Characteristics of human Society.” You state as an example the statement that Noah thought of God as an avaricious eater, Moses as one who paid back evil-doers in their own coin, and Christ as the embodiment of love. It looks exactly like the Devil quoting Scripture. Pray on what verses of the Bible do you base your first two assertions. My Bible says that God does not change. It says that God was kind to the Repentant Sinner in Mosaic times as well as in Christian times. It shows a God who is just and loving, merciful yet Mighty; It shows a God in whom there is no shadow of turning. God is not against the man who tries to ameliorate the conditions of the poor and needy. In fact that is one of the most important things that he wants his children to do.

2000 years ago, Christ was the Saviour of the poor. I agree with you. He still is. If you think you are rich, then there is no need for

you to go to him. But if you admit that you are not rich in the things that matter, then the best thing for you is to go to him and ask him for his unperishable riches. Christ did not help the poor by giving them money or by killing the poor. He was wiser than you, and still is. The same feudal system existed in those days as it does now. It was only Industrial Capital that was absent at that time. But the Lord did not go shedding somebody's blood about for saving the poor. He shed His own blood for you and me. Accept that blood, if you want to realise the peace that passeth all understanding. If mass methods would have worked in those days, he would have used them. If they did not work then, they will not work now either.

By changing circumstances you will not be able to change the mind of the individual. The root of the evil is in the mind of the individual, and unless it is changed, all other change is futile. Many systems that tried to improve masses have failed miserably, for all these overlooked the fact that masses are made up of individuals.

You consider the work of some people to re-construct old-time religion as a crime. I plead guilty. I challenge you to punish me if you can. Do you want my blood? You are welcome to have it. I do not want yours. I want your heart. Can you give it to me? Can you love me? Can you love the Lord whom I Love? Then you will do more good to the world and to me, than you will by murdering all the capitalists and religious people in the world. You are not the first Nero. Christ's church is not afraid of people like you. Neros have come and Neros have gone, but Christ and His Bride stand for ever.

"I think that in a Christian world, there cannot be exploitation, prostitution, and theft" is what you say. True. But where is that Christian Society. Today's Society is a Communistic, or an Americo-Materialistic Society. It is full of thoroughly non-Christian Doctrines and isms. Tell me which is that Nation that you will call Christian. Comparatively, India is the most Christian Nation on earth, because the national character is so akin to the Christian. But if you take America or England, the so-called Christian Nations, they are all so absolutely Christless. It is unfair to put the blame for a depraved society on Christ. The blame is to be laid at the door of those who reject Christ,

like you for example. If there was more of Christ in individual hearts, we would not have been living in the most putrified society of alltimes. It is lack of Christ and not Christianity that is to blame. Give more of christ to humanity, and, is what Christianity wants today. But you choose to go the christless way. If there is prostitution, is it among the true Christians or among the Christless? If there is theft and murder, is it among the true Christians or the Christless? If there is commercial exploitation, if there is industrial exploitation, is it among the Christians or among the Christless servants of Mammon? No, communism is not the solution. Communism might succeed in bringing about economic equality, but it cannot bring about human welfare. Equality of opportunity, without the incentive for private enterprise, results in forced labour. And this in its turn brings about / evils many times greater in magnitude than the evils existent in the present-day economic build-up.

In an economic buildup which follows the communistic lines, the human being becomes a slave of the state. Man prizes his freedom above even food and clothing. Whether it to be man or state, I refuse to be slave. I was born free and I will remain free till I die. You cannot force me to live in a state where I cannot breathe, talk, air my opinions, or worship the God of my choice. I prefer to die rather than live in such suffocating atmosphere. I stand for equal opportunity for all; but not for the complete cutting down of Private Enterprise. I do not want to see any poor in my world. I want the state to take care of it that every body is free from want. The State would have to use force to take the surplus out of the Capitalists labour value productions. The surplus value produced by him will have to be taken away from him, but not completely, because he too must live and work. I hate a Capitalist Beaureaucracy as much as I hate an official Bureaucracy. The State however is apparently incapable of doing away with bureaucracy in one form of other. There cannot be peace without power and tyranny, in a communistic land. It is just impracticable. It tends to make man lose the finer and nobler values of life which make life worth living. Cruelty and Ruthlessness become the highest values and human life begins to descend to the level of the animal. I will sacrifice everything I have before I allow my country to go that

way. An economy in which truth becomes a relative term, honesty becomes a weakness, and goodness the sign of frailty! I shudder to think of that. No you can kill me before you establish that in my country. I will not live to see it.

Do you think that when poverty and inequality is removed by your method of destroying the existing structure and building up something brand new, in which everything will be shockingly stereotyped and equal, where everybody will get enough to satisfy his need irrespective of the "amount or quality of work he does where there will be no incentive to individual effort, and the only means to make human beings work is the one used of old by slave-drivers, that will be ideal society? Do you think that inequalities will not creep up? Do you think the plan of paying the major and the private in the army the same pay will work? Can Stalin receive the same remuneration as the street Scavenger? Can Malik or Vishinsky go and live in one of the third-rate hotels of New York as his poorer brother will be forced to do? Do you think that the Doctor of Medicine will care to go and treat a patient at dead of night, if his remuneration is fixed? Do you think the factory worker will put in his whole might into the job when he knows full well that what he is going to get is the same irrespective of the quality or quantity of the work he does? You plead for equal pay for man and woman. I agree, provided they do equal work. There is no reason why a woman telegraphist should be paid less than a man telegraphist. Yes your society of the future is a dream, as prone to be a failure as the present day society in Russia is a failure as far as the higher values of life are concerned.

Yes, the hearts of the rich are adamant. I do not doubt your wisdom in saying that. But if their hearts are adamant, remember they will die hard. Remember the Lord who says, Vengeance is mine. Do not think that God is unjust. He knows what each deserves. You may not be able to see the wisdom of his justice, because you have not studied the whole history of the case. He knows each man's heart, and will recompense reward according to the merit of each. If you try to punish them by killing them out, You will also perish by the same sword. I appreciate your crusading spirit. But how I wish it were led in the right path! It is not necessary that one generation

should suffer so that the coming ones may be saved. You will not improve the world until you attack the root of evil. So long as men's hearts are evil, new evils will always be ready to creep up. You are sowing the wind, and you and coming generation, if there is to be one, will reap the whirl wind. Let us learn to love, my little brother, it is a loving heart that really conquers the world.

Let us not forget the fundamental fact that we are human beings. Mathematics does not apply to the human heart and soul. Any methods that rule out God will eventually fail. They have failed in the past. They are doomed to fail in the future. Let us love each other and see how fast it works. Let us learn to love, and to drive away every trace of hatred and malice out of our hearts. Then, brother, if you can accept the Lord Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour, you will know the peace that passeth all understanding. If the Lord blesses you, I will come over there in another year's time and then we will discuss these things in greater detail, and maybe the Lord might lead you to see the truth. Pray over it, if you can, and the Lord will bless you. If you want to see the Lord there is only one way, the way of Love and Faith. "I Love them that loveth me", sayeth the Lord, "and those that seek me early shall find me," Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him." What kind of seeking? Not the half-hearted type. "Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Not with the brains, brother, but your heart. That is what the Lord wants. That is what he made you for. He wants you to love him. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy: break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Ye have plowed wickedness ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men" (Hoseas 10:12-13).

I advise you brother if you do not take offense at my advising you, that if you really care for the truth, read as much as you can of the Bible Study it with reverence, and you will find so much to enrich your soul. Not one single fact of the Bible has till this day been disproved by any of the Critics. If there is any point where you think the

Bible gives an incongruous record, I am prepared to explain it to you. Try to study it in earnest, and you will not regret the day on which you began the study. Christianity is an all-time religion. The Bible is an alltime book. Many have tried to attack the historical veracity of the Bible stories, and what is popularly known as Higher Criticism, was in vogue in the second half of the nineteenth century, and in the first two or three decades of the twentieth. But today, Archeology and Geology have vindicated almost every single truth in the Great Book. Not one single fact has been disproved by any critic. If you doubt this statement, I challenge you with my limited knowledge of the Bible and higher Criticism, to advance one single historical fact of the old or New Testament, that has been disproved. I am prepared to defend every one of them.

May the Lord bless you to realise these truths. Once again I say, let us love each other. Let our arguments not come in the way of our friendship. Let us remember that we are human beings. I have a very warm corner in my heart for you. I hope you reciprocate my feelings. Arguments have never convinced man. Man gets convinced first and then proceeds to argue with a view to justify his conviction. That is pure human psychology. So I am not expecting these arguments to convince you. But I believe in the power of prayer. I am praying for you, and the Lord will someday open your spiritual eyes to see the truth. I will keep praying for you. Meanwhile I will be delighted to hear from you in reply to the questions and the points raised in this letter. I like this discussion very much.

Coming to personal matters, I am keeping good health. I had a funny accident recently. I went out picnicing with a group of boy-scouts, and while trying to cross a water-course, slipped on a rock and fell into a water-fall. Of course the water-fall was only about 20 feet deep, but it was enough to kill me. Fortunately while I was being taken away by the swift water-current, and was just about to fall down with the waterfall; my right leg struck against a rock at the brink of the fall. So my course was stopped and while, I was regaining my balance and trying to swim, one of my courageous little boys, ran over and extended his feet for me to hold on. I held on to it, and climbed up the rock, in full tweed suit with hat on, and everything but

the top of my hat wet. There was some money in my pocket and my watch also got badly soaked. My clothes were spoiled, but I myself was safe.

I am beginning to like my new place. The boys are some of the highest educated children in the country, and it is a pleasure to teach them. I have a fairly big-sized house all for myself, and am enjoying my stay here. Please tell your mother and father that I am keeping good health, and give them my best compliments. Where is Ipekutty now? Has Pathappan finished his course? Give my best wishes to both. Where is Chechi now? I have 'nt written to her sending her my congratulations on the new-born baby. Please congratulate Ipekutty also on my behalf. Has Saramma's marriage been postponed? When is your marriage? I hope I will be able to attend it or maybe, you don't care to marry. Are you a member of the party? Are you a worker? I am interested in knowing. What are your plans for the future? Are you going to be a worker, or are you going to pursue your studies?

Please write for all news. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Yours in Him.

5

My Dear Lonanpillai,

I have been delaying replying your letter of the 18th sept with a special purpose. I was rather irritated at reading your letter, which I had no right to be, and so I thought I would wait until I could write in an unexcited vein. In fact I have no right to get offended at whatever you might say, since I had used some strong words in my previous letters. I apologise to you for having offended you and caused you to write such angry words.

I am beginning to think that this correspondence is not bringing us anywhere. Nobody ever convinced anybody by argument. And perhaps it is no use trying to argue with you. Even if it were, you are not prepared to argue logically. It might be more useful to both of us if we discuss our subjects with less emotion and more logic.

You tell me that you are not concerned at all about the existence of God. You think that even if there is a God, he will not punish you for your deeds so long as you do them with sincerity. I would like to know the source of your information. Did God speak to you about this? How do you know what God will do and what He will not do. It is presumptuous on our part to pre-judge the thoughts of God. God is the Lord of this Universe, and He has a law. He wants you to obey those laws and does not ask you to do as you think best. If you want to know what the will of God is, you can read it in a book called the Bible, wherein the words of the Lord Jesus Christ are written so that you may see.

The main point is whether you have intelligence enough to see design behind this Universe. If you have and if you are prepared to think without the aid of western materialistic philosophies, you will see that man is a creation of God. You will also see that man is superior to all other living beings, in that he is able to choose between good and evil. If your intelligence is of the right type you can also see that there must be a purpose in this supreme creation. The Lord created everything else in the world for mankind and he made man with the special wish that man should of his own volition love God. God did not put any any compulsion on man whether to love God or to hate him, because He wanted spontaneous love from man. But man chose to hate God, and love himself more. Therefore man broke himself away from God. Anyone who cuts himself loose from the Eternal Source of Life is heir to death. So death came on Mankind.

God loved mankind yet. So he furnished a means by which it is possible for men to be reconciled to God. God is a just God. He must have disobedience punished. He must at the same time have mankind or part at least of it saved. S the Lord's plan was to take upon himself the punishment for the sin of mankind, and that explains the cross. Now the criterion for each individual appropriating for himself the benefits of this expiatory sacrifice was faith. It was faithlessness in God and faith in His enemy which made the first man disobey God and believe the snake. So every one who believes in the words of the Lord that, "He that believeth on me has eternal life", and compensated for the disobedience of the first man with his own obedience is

redeemed by the death on calvary. This is the simple Gospel. If you believe it, you will find yourself becoming a new man and inheriting the peace that passes all understanding, which I now enjoy.

I want to comment upon some of your arguments. I am just showing you the other side. I do not expect you to swallow everything I say. These are things which you do not usually find in books, because the world, and you along with them will consider it foolish. One of the first Universal truths, is that the majority is not essentially right. This is the fundamental flaw in democracy.

You have stated that the people in the days of old were barbarous, living a life akin to that of animals. What is your evildence for this statement? The fact is that man has deteriorated in his intelligence and culture. You will realise the truth of this if you compare the ancient civilisations of Greece, Egypt, China, or India with the civilisations existent in these countries today- Even the negroes of Africa had a very very advanced civilisation. The Babylonians, the Assyrians, the people of Knossos, were all in no way inferior to the people of today in intelligence. A man of the intellectual capacity of Socrates or Plato or Aristotle, or Euclid or Pythagoras or Bhaskara, has not been born in recent times. We have no evidence of any civilisation that existed before 5000 years and we know from the Bible that people believed in the true God even that early. There is no evidence in support of your theory that man began by worshipping water, fire, stars, sun, moon etc, or other natural phenomenon and then rose to the worship of God. All the evidence available points to the fact that the worship of God has been purer in the beginning in all religions and time has been a corrupting factor in the knowledge of God in all religions. You will realise that christ taught a religion that is devoid of all superstition, but later, Mary-worship and superstitions were brought in by priests who had no better way of squeezing money from the people.

Christianity is not a reasonable religion. The Mohamedans claim that theirs is reasonable natural religion. But Christianity is essentially supernatural in its concepts. It is the only religion that talks of a God reaching out to humanity. But your mind is cobwebbed with prejudices and it will be hard for you to see the truth until the sword

of the Spirit strikes at your heart some day. The Lord will get you someday, and I am praying that day will be near enough.

You have tried to judge Christianity by the conduct of its professed adherents. You are forgetting that most of these are born into that religion and it is nothing of their own choice. Christianity is an individual religion, and everybody has to make the choice for himself. You cannot call yourself a Christian since your choice has been the devil and this world and not Christ. There are very few Christians in this world today, I am afraid less than a million, even though there are more than 850 millions professing that religion. Most Catholics are not Christians and so also with the Protestants and the Orthodox. Do not consider Pope as the representative of Christianity. He is the greatest known enemy of Christianity, greater even than Soviet Russia. So long as he forbids men to study the Bible for themselves, he is an enemy of Christ.

Since Christianity is not the result of any of man's experiments, you can be sure that it is not going to vanish. Even in the hey-days of Communism in the World, you can find a few thousands who are faithful to their Lord.

It amuses me when I see you trying to assume superiority over me by saying you know Higher Differential Calculus. Brother, excuse this intellectual snobbery, but take it from me that I have an intellect that is at least five times as good as yours is. I can learn higher differential calculus without a teacher if I want to, just as I have studied Trigonometry and teach it to my boys now. Do not try to evade the issue by covering your ignorance. The theory of Evolution is one of the most fascinating studies for any intellectual, and any serious thinker must have some idea of it, before he can find any solution to economical problems.

You ask me again if I believe that the world was created in 4004 B.C. It is nowhere said in my Bible so, and I do not believe it. The earth may be 6 million or 10 billion years old for all I know, and I can wager you nobody knows better. But no scientist has yet proved that man has been on this earth for more than 6 or 7 thousand years.

You can understand Vivekananda, because he says something which you can twist to mean that you are also travelling towards God. Don't be under that wrong idea. You are headed towards perdition. No man realises God without seeking Him. If you want to escape, begin to seek Him while there is still time.

I am not planning to comment on some paragraphs of your letter, because they are personal. The Lord will judge who has done more good to this world, I or you. He will also decide who loves the poor more, you or I.

My mind may not be open, but for me spiritual things come before the body's needs. In my conception, the spirit is eternal and the body is ephemeral, so I would care comparatively more for my soul than for my body. So with the bodies and spirits of others. I have eyes to see misery and poverty around me. Do not think that I am not touched by those things.

You consider the Economy of Communism as the only perfect economy. I say that it will be much more short-lived than Capitalism. Capitalism with its obvious flaws has held its own for many years, and is just about ready to give in in another century or so. But Communism as a world system will not even live for a decade, I am sure. The tyranny and the exploitation of those under authority by those in authority, will lead to sudden capitulation of the entire structure.

Nonviolence and violence are relative terms. There is no such thing as absolute non-violence. Non-violence has contributed to Indian Freedom more than any single factor, and it may or may not be a success in future. It depends upon the mentality of the people who use the weapon.

I am not an apologist of the present policy of the Govt. of India, and hence am not willing to defend them in their arrests of Socialist leaders.

To say that Christianity has not made any changes in the world is betraying ignorance. The civilisation of the world up to the middle of the 19th century had its foundations on some Christian principles, though there were many other, really larger in number, principles that were forgotten by the peoples of the world.

Christ's mission has not failed, because he did not come to change the world. He came to call a few individuals. He came to put the son against his father, the daughter against his mother and brother against his brother. He is calling a few even in these days. You can if you care to, accept his call today.

I have little else to tell you. I have told you what it is my duty in Christ to tell you. It is up to you to make the decision. The Lord is still beckoning to you. May He open your eyes to see the Light. I shall continue to pray for you.

You may reply to my opinions if you care to, but I am not, going to carry on this controversy any further. I shall be glad to let you have the last word.

Continue to write to me even if you do not discuss these things with me. I have a heart that loves you, otherwise I would not have wasted these words on you. Be a seeker. Do not trust books blindly. Be brave and face issues.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He open your heart and fill it with His Peace.

With Love,

Yours in His Service

P.S. Give enclosed letter to Chechi.

6

My Dear Kunjoonj,

Thanks very much for your postcard. It was nice to know that you are keeping alive.

Laziness is man's a greatest enemy. It is besetting me in this country, because everybody here is dormant and lazy. But you there, with all the intellectual stimulus that you desire, have no apology for laziness. You must be able to find time once in two or three months to write a few pages to someone who appreciates those pages, and who is most anxious to hear about you. I cannot see why you fail to write to me.

Your P.C. almost scared me. When I saw the heading, “The Last Journey”, I could not make out why your thoughts should be about that first. Yes, Tagore was a man who had a glimpse of the Eternal, what many call the Great Unknown, but what I call the Great knowable. I have also had a glimpse of the Truth and my life has been transformed by that vision. I am an ardent seeker of Truth today, and I look for it, not in books, not in the writings and speeches of great men, not in the wisdom of the world, but in everyday life around me, right inside my own heart, within the circumference of my own experience. It does not make me fatalistic. It gives me a new power, a new courage, new views and visions, and a new faith with which to go on. I fall often, but I get up and push forward towards my Goal. In my case the Great Experience which drew me towards the Truth and gave me a glimpse of It, was a contact sweet in its freshness, with the Lord Jesus Christ. Others might have approached the same Goal through other sources.

I have been reading Krishnamurti’s book, “Life in Freedom”, wherein he says, “Truth is greater than every book of every religion, greater than every belief you hold dear.” It is so true. When we want to circumscribe Truth with our own petty beliefs and dogmas, Truth becomes elusive. That is why most religions fail in their purpose.

Jesus Christ has provided one of the easiest methods of approach to God, and realisation of Him. There may be methods of Yoga and Tapas. Methods of Renunciation or Meditation, but for me the method of Jesus seems the easiest. His words, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lonely in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my Yoke is easy and my burden is light” have an irresistible attraction for me. I am a very poor disciple of His today, but I am conscious of the fact that every day, I am striving to serve Him better. A day may come, and that very soon, when He willing, I will be able to take up my cross and follow Him. It may be two years, it may be more, but I must do it. I have promised my all to Him, and I do not intend keeping anything back.

I was brought here by the Lord with a purpose. I realise that only now. I have been asking the Lord for many years that I may be taken

away from among my friends that I may be able to view life with a pair of fresh unprejudiced eyes. I have been given what I asked and I have been blessed with the Vision that I wanted. But I am still not acting up to what I am conscious of as my duty to God. It is a huge task that waits me in this world. It requires a great struggle within myself, and a good great deal of sacrifice. Yet I am not afraid of it. The struggle has already begun, and the sacrifice will soon be made. If I can get rid of my pride and my vanity. I will very soon be ready to begin my work. I hope the Lord prepares me and leads me to my duty.

I have no problems in Life. I see the meaning of Life, and the only ideal that I now have is that others may know it too. It is hard to convince anyone, because it is too simple for the sophisticated twentieth-century brain. It is the simple purpose of a human father begetting children, so that he may love them and be loved by them. The human parent may have many other reasons for begetting offspring. But the Heavenly Father - and Mother - in - One has only one purpose, to love and to be loved by.

If we realise this, if we can understand that we have been created so that we may love Him, and be loved by Him, life is no longer a mystery. You understand the Greater Life of which our terrestrial life is but a microscopic segment, as the source of all life, and also we see our earthly life as a probationary period when we can choose whether we want to Love God or love Mammon. If men can see that this few years that they have here, the uncertainty of life, the stealthiness of death, even the lusts of the flesh are all integral parts of His Divine Plan for us, whereby we may show Him that we would prefer Him to everything else, then they would not try to compromise religion with a life of greed and hate. What kind of a religion do we see all around us? Either it tends to ecclesiasticism whereby men are blinded to the truth, or to Roman Catholicism whereby men worship idols rather than God, or even to the Reformed Evangelical movement, in which there is a strong inclination of compromise money and God, even though most other forms of sin are ruled out.

We need a new type of Christianity, the Christianity that has the burning ascetic zeal of the first century an uncompromising torrential

soul-pervading love for God and His will, a willingness to consider the world as a strange city and ourselves as pilgrims, to stand and suffer, mockery, ridicule and persecution. We need to rethin Christ and His Cross, and gain our victories through His Cross.

But what am I really doing about it? Very little, I should say. I am preaching and teaching a group of boys to grow up as children of God, but very often I find myself unable to carry out the precepts that I ask them to observe. My own life is but a poor example of the Life of Christ, Yet I am trying to live the Christ-life as much as lieth in my power. I am aware of the fact that the amount of power that I possess at the moment is quite limited. But my soul panteth after Him, and I am definite that He will rain His Grace on me, and I will be able to climb towards Him. The struggle in my sinful flesh is most terrific. I succumb very often to it, but then there are continuous periods, When I do live a comparatively pure life. There are moments when the flesh gets the better of my spirit, and I get angry of I fall into impure thoughts and sometimes unclean actions. But most of the time I keep a heart free of all hate, full of love for everyone around me at times it kindless a fire in the hearts of some of these dear children around me. Some day or other many of them might come to see the Vision that I have seen and strive to follow it.

The Lord hath been merciful unto His Servant by using Him to bring back some of the wildest of these boys to Christ in a most miraculous fashion. It takes a lot of suffering on my part, but it is a suffering which is in itself a great glory. O, how I wish I could continue to be persecuted as I was in Jimma! How happy I was to suffer shame for the Name of Christ!

Brother dear, if you do pray, forget not to make daily prayers for this weak servant of His. Pray that he may get the victory over all his little weaknesses, pray that he would become a man of prayer, pray that he would be used mightily of God for the glory of His Kingdom. Yes, I need all the prayer that you can pray for me. I need clouds of prayer to go up into His Presence on my behalf. Do share in this ministry of mine by prayer.

Tell me more about your new life. It is hypocritic to say that you have no time. No one works so hard as I do. And I have scores of

letters to reply. I find time for all that. It is possible for you too. Do try and write to me in detail. You do not understand how much I appreciate your letter's. Don't you know that you are one of the few persons in this world who understand me? I feel so lonesome, and there is no greater pleasure than to hear from brothers like you.

You are still sleeping, still dreaming. New responsibilities, new outlooks, have only made you less of a thinker. You got to rise up, and see what you can do. There is a lot than you can, if only you will think. It is hard to change yourself without changing your circumstances. I have tried it and failed. I could not change myself until I changed my circumstances. But it is possible. If you try, you can become a different man, and can serve God better. Remember that every child of God is a cell of leaven, you are expected to leaven the whole lump. Exert your influence on those around you, to win them for Christ. You cannot do it in your own power, but you will have to acquire a daily supply of His Power by hours of Prayer. May the Lord bless you by leading you to get closer to Him, and to know peace by fearlessly confidently abiding in him.

How is your Madam? My respectful and affectionate regards to her. Does she understand you? I wish she does.

Do find some time to write to me in detail.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He give you abundantly of His Grace. May His Name be glorified through our lives.

with Seasonal Greetings, Love and Prayers.,

Yours in his Service,

7

Dear Friends,

This time the silence has been longer than usual. Pressure of work is only part of the explanation. The enervation of the will brought about by the climate must bear the rest of the blame.

The tropical climate however has not kept me from trying to do a good deal. I give below a list of a few things I have been doing. It

usually means neglecting my friends. The result is often heavy loss of friends. A few forgive and persist in writing. Many forget. They are too busy. So I must also forgive and persist in writing. Many forget. They are also too busy. So I must also forgive.

But then, I need your prayers. I simply cannot get along without them. Here are a few items that you can give thanks for:

APRIL & MAY (1) A very successful *University Commission Conference* where a group of Christian University teachers got together for ten days to consider the future of the Christian colleges in India, and the whole University system. I gave the opening address on University and Religion and led the group discussions daily on Christian Community in Residential Colleges.

(2) *A Christian Students' Conference*. About two hundred Christian students in conference for three days.

(3) *A Leadership Training Camp* for the Secretaries of College Christian Unions. A dozen young men in camp with four excellent leaders and myself for one week.

(4) *Summer Bible School for Christian Teachers*. Four weeks of living and studying together with 17 High School and college Teachers. Six hours of study a day, six days in the week. Four Instructors. I taught Old Testament Introduction, Sermon on the Mount, Romans, and Church History.

JUNE & JULY. (1) Six week 7000 mile all-India tour visiting Christian students in College Centers.

(2) I got back from tour on the 15th of July and have now started in on a full program of work here. Keep something like the following in mind when you pray for me:

MONDAY: Writing for the Church Weekly (am contributing editor) usually an article a week and a page of Doctrinal Question and Answers. Evening: Bible Class for younger staff of Union Christian College.

TUESDAY: Morning: Scripture Class for 130 Seniors at College. Evening: Women Students' Missionary Union Bible Class.

WEDNESDAY: Morning: Scripture for 100 Sophomores. Evening: Editorial Board Meeting for The Church Weekly.

THURSDAY: Morning: Scripture Class for Seniors, Evening: Men Students' Missionary Union Bible Class.

FRIDAY: Study and preparation for week-end Retreats, Addresses, Sermons and classes. Evening: Women's Social Service League: Bible Class.

SATURDAY: Evening: Student Christian Fellowship Meetings, attended by 200 Christian Students.

In addition to these, I travel to various College centers over the week-end to meet Christian student groups. While I am in town, a steady stream of student visitors call at the house for counselling and fellowship.

I narrate all these with two purposes in mind: one, that you may forgive my not writing as frequently as I should; two, that your prayers may share this heavy burden with me.

Meanwhile, the suggestion has come forward that I must qualify myself to teach in a Theological Seminary. This may mean that I may have to spend another couple of years in study at a place like Yale Divinity School. I may come over in the Fall of 1957. It would be good to be back in the U.S., but I know that my call is certainly to labor in this land.

I am anxious to know how things are with you. Drop me a line when you can. God bless you.

Yours in His love,

PAUL VARGHESE

8

November 9, 1956

My dear Semmassen,

I wanted to have a long chat with you at Trivandrum, but you were so busy and I had to come away soon to look after my work here, so it was not possible.

But I have a feeling that our last exchange of words might have led to an estrangement which could have been avoided if we had more time at our disposal. And it is to clarify some of those things that I am writing this letter.

Whether or not I will go to Ethiopia is still somewhat indefinite. The Fellowship House has been kind enough to give me permission to leave for two or three years and I have written to His Imperial Majesty to that effect. I have not had any reply yet.

What I said about the way you treated me at Ernakulam, I really meant. If you had said one of two things, either that such things were not in your power either to recommend or to sanction, or otherwise that you were not interested in my getting to see the Emperor on his coming to Travancore-Cochin, things would have been very easy.

When I came to see you that afternoon, you gave me two pieces of wrong information: (1) that my name had been included along with the members of the Orthodox Church who were to receive the Emperor, and (2) that my pass had already been issued and that I could pick it up from the DSP. On that basis I went to the DSP who told me very rudely that he had no passes to give me, and I had to speak to him very strongly and say that he was not being very helpful when he knew that my name was on the list. Then he said that I had to get a letter from the Chief Engineer before he would issue me a pass. So I went to see the Chief Engineer who blandly told me that the list had already been issued and given to the Collector and that I had to go and see him. Now I had already made two or three trips in search of these officers, and I did not even know who the Collector was. I am not in the habit of running after officers from favours and I felt very much embarrassed. I finally ran into a person who I thought must be the Collector (as he fortunately was) who showed me the list on which my name was not entered at all. I went to the aerodrome in the hope that something will turn up, and what actually turned up was the DSP who looked daggers at me and asked me to stand me to stand outside the cordon. I am not used to such humiliation, and if you had not told me that my name had been included and that the pass had been issued, I would have dealt with the whole matter in a different way. I hope you understand.

I shall try to be frank with you. I do sincerely wish that you will be a little more careful about what you say. You are creating a very unfavourable impression about yourself by the careless things that come out of your mouth. Your going about saying that you are a 'Simple Simon' and all that has by no means helped to build up your prestige in the minds of the Ethiopian or Indian officials in the Emperor's party of you will speak less and say what you mean, people may respect you much more than they do.

The way you have been indifferent to the several letters that I sent you while you were in Ethiopia and then the audacity with which you turned up one day without even apologising for your silence with an offer of a job in the theological school there was in very poor taste. You knew jolly well that I was not interested in a big salary. You offered me this job as if you were doing me a great favour out of your love for me. You were rude enough to hint that the work I was doing in Addis Ababa is quite insignificant. You still do not know anything about what I am doing.

And then on top of all this, you had the cheek to tell me that day in Trivandrum that you had been recommending my name to the Emperor, suggesting perhaps that the offer that the Emperor was making was on the strength of your recommendation. You might as well know that I had twice sent word to the Emperor since his arrival here that I was not available. Even when I talked to His Imperial Majesty, I tried my best to get out of it. If I come now, it will be for a minimum period of time, after which I want to come back to the Fellowship House and my Rs. 75 per month, as I have already told the Emperor.

I am saying all this only to clear up our misunderstandings. I shall be very grateful to you if you will come to Addis Ababa for a few days here with me. I invite you in all earnestness. You will enjoy the peace and quiet here after the hectic time that you have had recently. There are so many other things that I would like to explain to you personally.

I am very much interested in the Theological School in Addis Ababa, and would very much enjoy a long discussion with you about

it. If I ever come to Addis Ababa, I should even consider taking a few classes at the School, if you would consider it worthwhile. In any case, if I do come to Ethiopia, I must, at any cost, be on the best of terms with you. That is why I am anxious that if we want to call each other names, we should do that here itself. So come, Semmassen, at least for a day, to Always. Thommachen and Joseph Achen and Abraham Achen and your many friends here would be very happy to see you. I will ask my brother Avarachen also to come, if you will let me know when you are coming.

With my love,
Yours affectionately

9

Dear Kathryn,

No excuse I can proffer would be sufficient for my failure in sending this form to you on time. Overwork led me to a break-down, and I have been down with nothing more than just fatigue. I am still not too well, and it has not been possible for me to get sufficient rest even during the past month. So I am even this week forced to rest, and breaking my rest to write this letter.

It is not necessary for me to say that it is your fervent prayer and persistent intercession that makes my work fruitful here. I am more than grateful to God and to my brethren and sisters at Calvary for their wonderful love and concern.

I had planned to come back to the States for further study leading towards the Ph. D. degree, so that I can teach in the Theological Seminary here where we can train pastors, but God is now calling me to a strange new work in a far-off land. I am still unable to give out the details, but I may know more definitely by Christmas time. Please pray fervently that I might always be in the center of the Lord's will.

Hope you and family are keeping good health. May God be with you allways, and bless your labours. May His Kingdom come.

Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,
Paul Varghese

10

Dear Paul and Rosemarie,

It has not been easy not to write to you, for my conscience would have been much clearer if I had written. But life has been unbelievably hectic.

And now things have changed all on a sudden again - this adventure of living for God is truly exciting. Not a dull moment any more.

I am leaving for Ethiopia in two weeks. The details you will get in my mimeographed letter which will come in a few days. The full details even I would know only after I get to Addis Ababa on December 14th.

My services have been loaned to the Ethiopian Emperor (who was here a few weeks ago) by the Fellowship House for a period of three years, with a possible maximum of five years. I would still continue to be associated with the Fellowship House and work here for at least a month every year.

Among other things this takes care of our financial problem for five years, at the end of which period we are hoping that our Rubber plantation will begin to give its yield.

The amount that has accrued from your generous gift this year, is being given for the training of two men who are now in training for the Missionary ministry in our Theological Seminary. I am making arrangements to constitute it properly as a legal trust, and shall soon send you a copy of the Trust deed. What a great help this is for us we will never be able to express adequately to you.

The job I am going into is a secular job, connected with the national and spiritual development of Ethiopia, but I will work very closely with the Ethiopian Church, which is extremely reactionary. My task is going to be unusually hard. Without your prayer support and that of others, I might collapse. Kindly continue to uphold me.

I am anxious to see a family picture of yours. Do you have a spare one.

May I also convey along with this my most sincere wishes for Christmas joy in your hearts. May His wonderful love come again to build us up and to make us instruments of that same love to reconcile the world unto Himself,

Yours

11

December 1, 1956

My dear Friends,

Things have taken a completely unexpected turn in my life. God's ways are past man's understanding.

I will be leaving this country for Ethiopia in two weeks. I have accepted an assignment as Liaison Officer for the Government of Ethiopia for Indo-Ethiopian development projects. This includes also the fostering of relationships between the churches in India and Ethiopia. My work will be partly in India and partly in Ethiopia.

This has been no easy decision for me, especially in the light of the fact that plans were complete for my being at Yale next Fall.

As you perhaps know, the Ethiopian Emperor has been visiting this country a few weeks ago. He has been requesting me repeatedly for the last six years that I should go back to that country. Six years ago when I left Ethiopia for the States, the pressure was so great that I almost promised, but got away by saying that I would consider if after I had finished my studies in the States.

Then, when I was just about to leave the States, he came to Princeton University, and there asked me to come back. I told him that I had been away from my country for seven years and that I had to go back to India.

When he came here early this month he asked his son, Duke of Harrar to speak to me. I sent word to him that I was going to the States for further study, and could not come now. He then asked the Cabinet Minister of the Government of India, who was his host in this country, to persuade me to come. I sent word that I had a religious vocation and was not available for secular jobs.

He then met me personally and said that he wanted to talk to me. In the interview that followed I explained to him my reasons. He understood that mine was a problem of vocation. He said that he had no business to say anything further if I said that I had no vocation from God to come to Ethiopia. But he suggested that I must be open to consider whether God was calling me through him. He said that he and his country needed me. I promised to give him a definite reply in a few days after prayerful consideration.

Back at the Fellowship House, the decision was by no means easy. But as we sought together for the will of God, the unanimous decision emerged that the Emperor's persistent request should not be ignored and that his suggestion about this being a call from God should be taken seriously. I was therefore to be loaned to the Ethiopian Emperor for a period of three years with a possible maximum of five years. I could leave in June 1957 when I would have left for the States in any case.

This I communicated to the Emperor who was in New Delhi by that time. He telegraphed back that I should see him again in Calcutta, 1700 miles from here. I flew up there on November 15th. He said that I should not insist on the five-year maximum and must come for my life-time. I replied that this was not in my power, and that I could make no further commitment at this time, I would continue to be an inmate of the Fellowship House and would return there at the end of the period.

He then said that I should come over right away. I pointed out that I had the responsibility for Bible Schools and Conferences in April-May and had to be here at that time. He suggested that I go to Ethiopia now and come back in April. So I leave Bombay on December 14th.

There will be one or two other friends who will devote more time to the work of the Fellowship House. I will be responsible for their support. I will be devoting a major portion of my salary for church work both at the Fellowship House and outside. The Fellowship House will be my home, both physically and spiritually, and I would return here from time to time.

As you see, the change in my life demands a complete reorganisation of my external life. But if my inner life continues to be grounded in Christ and keeps growing, I know that I shall by no means lack opportunity for serving him both in Ethiopia and in this country. Second only to the work in India, has been my prayer and desire to sow the seed of a new life in the degenerate Ethiopian Church. Knowing as I do that the task is too immense for me, I shall launch forth trusting in His grace and leaning on your prayers.

The work at the Fellowship House will continue to grow even in my absence. That will be my responsibility. So do not give up praying for the work here.

I had begun writing Christmas notes to some of you, but will not be able to get much farther down the list. So will you most generously accept this as a personal note?

I shall not be here at Christmas time, and my temporary address in Ethiopia would be P.O. Box 678, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I will be reaching there on the night of December 14th. I shall write again soon.

May I also wish you, in this season of joy, the precious gift of His indwelling grace. May the wonder and joy of His love flood your hearts and lives. May be blessy you.

Yours in Him
Paul Varghese

12

Dear Friends,

This year I was not able to write a personal note to many of you even at Christmas. But the readiness with which many of you have responded to my multiple letters reassures me of your genuine friendship and affection for me. Many of your Christmas greetings went to India and are now being forwarded here.

You probably want to know what I am doing here. I work here in the Private Secretariat of His Imperial Majesty Haile Sellassie I Emperor of Ethiopia.

I am his private secretary in matters relating to Indian Relations and Education in Ethiopia. I also assist the chief Private Secretary as a consultant. My office is inside the palace.

My religious work is on my own initiative, and is being slowly built up now. We have an English Bible Class in my home every Sunday, when about 25 to 30 well-educated Indian Christians gather together and study the Gospel of John. I will also soon begin to teach at the Theological School of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. I hope to begin other small study groups after I have made my trip to India in April - May.

I hope to be at the Fellowship House by the middle of April, and will be taking part in the Holy Week Retreat, the Students' Conference (200 students in conference for five days) and the Bible School (20-25 Christian High School and College teachers in residence at the F.H. for four weeks). Please pray for all these, and also for my work here.

I should be back in Ethiopia by the first week of June, about which time I shall write to you again. Thank You so much for your friendship and kind remembrance. May God bless you and keep you.

In Him

Paul Verghese

13

January 11, 1957

Dear Sunday School Class:

I wanted to write to you earlier and tell you about the new developments in my life. I hope some of you at least have seen the multiple letter that I sent out at Christmas time regarding the steps which led me to take the decision to come to Ethiopia.

Here I am now employed at the Private Secretariat of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor, as an additional Private Secretary. It is a very responsible and influential position, and there can be wonderful opportunities of witnessing to the wonder and glory of the Love of God in Jesus Christ.

Now that I have left India, it does not mean that I am no longer associated with the work of the Fellowship House. You can continue to pray both for the work of the Fellowship House and for my work here. I do need your prayers very much because of the many temptations amidst which I live. But even more is the need for the prayer support of all my friends for the work of the Fellowship House. It has been because of prayer like yours that that place has been showing the light of Christ to many for the past year or two. Please continue to pray for the work there.

I will be going back to the Fellowship House to teach at our summer Bible School even though it would cost me U.S. \$ 1000 to do so. Summer Bible School usually begins the week after Easter. If you want to help the school, you can always send your contributions to the Revd. C. A. Abraham, Bursar, Alwaye Fellowship House, U.C. College P.O., Alwaye, Kerala, India. No money should be sent to me in future, but should be sent to the Revd. Abraham who has taken my place.

I am more grateful than ever for your continued interest in my work and in my country, and shall continue to depend on your prayers. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless each one of you as you seek to obey Him and to labour in His vineyard.

Yours in Him

14

Memorandum - Secret

From

T. Paul Verghese

To

His Excellency the Minister of Pen

Your Excellency,

May I be permitted to submit the following regarding the Raja of Faridkot with whom negotiations are reported to be in progress regarding the development of a considerable area of Ethiopian land under his responsibility:

I admit to two serious drawbacks in this memorandum: first, that I have not seen the previous correspondence on the subject, and two, that my information is only gathered from hearsay and has to be verified from other reliable sources.

I have heard from reliable Indian sources that:

a. the Raja does not love his own country India and is anxious to leave it since he is only an ordinary citizen of India without special privileges.

b. his main concern is to take his money out of India and settle in a place where he is likely to have special privileges and high honours as he used to have while ruling Faridkot.

c. his administration of Faridkot was not outstanding and his people are not generally very fond of him.

d. the Government of India is not likely to take any responsibility regarding him.

e. his personal character is open to serious question and charges of profligacy have been made about him, which lead one to suspect that he may not be completely successful in developing the area allotted to him.

I believe it is in the province of the responsibility given to me by His Imperial Majesty to make a few recommendations:

a. If any agreement is to be entered into with the Raja it should be only for a period of 30 years with the explicit condition that he would be prepared to leave the land with all the settlers on payment of an adequate compensation for the improvements effected by him.

b. The Raja shall be subject to the laws of the Empire and shall claim no more privileges before the law than any other citizen of India would normally have. He shall not be exempted from the Income tax laws of the Empire neither shall the settlers whom he is likely to bring from Faridkot be exempted from the Immigration laws of the Empire.

c. The Raja shall not demand any subsidy or other financial help from the Imperial Government of Ethiopia.

d. After the first five years during which the return from the land are likely to be offset by the heavy capital expenditure, the Raja shall be required to pay a nominal annual rent of ETH. \$ 10,00,000 for the use of the land.

e. The Raja and the settlers on his estate shall be entitled to the protection and assistance of the Imperial Ethiopian Police.

Respectfully submitted

Paul Verghese

Addis Ababa

January 21, 1957. T.

15

To,

Fr. K. C. Joseph

Aluva

I am very dissatisfied with the facilities available for independent thinking and research in this country and am hoping that Oxford would provide me a kind of atmosphere in which I can do my own thinking and syudyng. I will work toward a D. Phill degree at Oxford, but this may turn out not to be practical if Oxford does not suit my particular interest at this point. I am also interested in getting a closer understanding of Roman Catholic thought, especially in some of its more creative new movements and therefore I would like to do some studying at the Institute Catholique at Paris or at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, but this would require French and Latin Languages which I still have to master adequately.

16

July 1, 1961

Christ is risen, Grace to you and Peace from the Risen Lord.

For the third time the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches will meet this year, at New Delhi. The past twelve years

have shown us what we of the Orthodox Churches share in common with Protestant Christians and what separates them for us. The gap is not such that we can hope, barring a miracle, to find unity in faith and Eucharist with them in the near future.

But thanks to the World Council and the facilities in communication afforded by the times, we of the Byzantine and Monophysite groups of Churches are discovering each other. The gap between us is not such as cannot be hoped to be bridged, given charity and understanding on both sides, and the grace of God.

There have been conversations between our various delegates both at Amsterdam and at Evanston, but these have been of but limited value, perhaps because the talks were not preceded by any systematic preparation.

We, the undersigned, belonging to the Syrian orthodox church of India, are anxious that we should meet again in New Delhi, and perhaps, if circumstances permit, in Kerala. But in order that our conversations may be more substantial, it is necessary that a few papers are produced and distributed in advance, before we assemble in New Delhi. We do not officially represent our Church. Neither would any of the papers to be prepared have any official authorization behind them. This should however not prevent us from opening our minds and hearts to each other in love and truth. We may have unpleasant things to say to each other, but we shall be determined to say them in charity.

This letter comes to you with the humble request that you would drop a note to the Rev. Verghese, I Canterbury Road, Oxford, England, whether you or anyone else whom you know to be coming to New Delhi willing and able to prepare a short paper on themes related to the following questions:

a. The relationships between the various primatial sees at the middle of the 5th century.

b. What are our sources for knowing what happened in the Council of Ephesus (449) and the Council of Chalcedon (451). To what degree are these accounts biased? Can we reconstruct a fairly new

neutral picture of what actually happened? To what extent were the proceedings of these assemblies influenced by imperial pressure? by the rivalries between the Patriarchal sees? by social and economic parties among the peoples of the Empire? by fluctuations in the civil service officialdom of the Empire?

c. How many bishops attended the Council of Chalcedon? How many signed the decrees? What in the statement of faith of Chalcedon was found objectionable by the Monophysite bishops? Are these points still held objectionable?

d. Why did the Monophysites object to the formula “in two natures after the incarnation?” What did they object to in the Tome of Leo? is the Tome still accepted by the Byzantine Churches as an official statement of the faith?

e. Do the Byzantine Churches today anathematize Dioscurus? Do the Monophysite Churches anathematize Leo? If they do, on what grounds? Can these anathemas be reconsidered?

f. Can we have a study of the Christology of the Byzantine and Monophysite Churches as they appear today in the liturgies and the formularies of sacerdotal ordination? On what points do the two Christologies differ? Are these differences irreconcilable?

g. What are the conditions that either side would advance before intercommunion can be established? What would be the place of the Ecumenical See of Constantinople if such inter-communion were to be made possible? Do the Monophysite Churches object to any of the decisions of the fifth, sixth and seventh Councils?

h. What other problems exist between the two groups of Churches?

These questions are not meant to be exhaustive, and any suggestions that you would have as to what the agenda of our conversations in India should consist of would be most welcome.

Please also let us have your suggestions as to who from your Church should write papers and on what topics.

Remember us in your prayers.

Yours in Our Lord Jesus Christ,

Fr. K. Philipose

Dn. T. Paul Verghese

17

To A Friend

1966 Jan. 24

My election to the episcopate was done by my Church contrary to my express request to be allowed to continue to work as a priest for atleast 10 more years. I do not think that I will be consecrated in the coming year or so. I do appreciate, however, your good wishes and prayers.

18

ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
KOTTAYAM, KERALA
INDIA

FR. T. PAUL VERGHESE
PRINCIPAL

1-2-1969

It is time I let you know that I do exist. I left Geneva in August 1967 full eighteen months ago. And I have not written to many of my friends - even to those who have been good enough to write me twice in the interval.

Here at the Seminary, things have been moving fast - at least by Indian standards. We have now a new building thanks to thousands of people who have given so liberally, both here and abroad - 44 single rooms, 6 faculty rooms, a student lounge, an auditorium which can seat 400, a spacious library and reading-room, 4 class rooms, administration offices and the Principal's quarters - all that packed in to one 'L' shaped building. It is just right for our small Seminary of 50 students and ten teachers. We wonder how we managed when all

we had was an antique 3-storey building (150 years old) where we used to pack five and six students to a room! We haven't paid all our bills. We need another \$ 20,000 to pay the builder and get our furniture.

Of course there is much more to do here than I have been able to. The Building is only the starting point. Now we need a few good teachers and then perhaps some better quality students to benefit from the building and the faculty. It looks like both faculty and students will begin to get better in another two years time. Then I hope I can go and get started on something else!

What do you think I want to do next? Certainly not be a bishop or a big church administrator. You would hardly believe me if I told you what I think I want to do.

I am not world-weary, but I do want to get away from it all. The world is complex but I think I can manage to live in it without being completely thrown over. But if I want to live in it with perspective I need to withdraw for a while to a disciplined community of solitude, reflection and prayer. I see quite clearly that overcoming self is the greatest victory a man can win. I also see that I myself am not making much progress there; neither do most of the people I see around me in the world. The toughness of a disciplined and strong human will is the ingredient without which there cannot be any real salvation for society or individual, and that will can be shaped best in a modern monastic community.

Well, Well, let me not upset you too much. I only wanted to say I am living on, as peculiar and eccentric as ever. I enjoy my work despite many frustrations. I travel often (five times a year outside India seems to be in the average) and get intellectually bored even oftener.

Yet life remains worth living. Mainly because He is there like a Rock- dependable, the only really dependable reality in the flow of time. Perhaps also because men are men. The boys and my colleagues keep me engaged and stimulated.

I edit a journal on Higher Education which relieves the monotony of theology. I have a couple of books due to various publishers - that

helps to keep up the tension. In a few weeks I should complete the last Chapter of "Man and Freedom." Two other books are on the Oriental Orthodox Churches. If I were in a monastery I could easily produce two or three books a year without too much strain.

Indian conditions of food and climate detract from my already limited capacity for work. Right now the temperature is 34° centigrade, and we are in Lent, when we take only two light meals a day.

Easter is coming up soon. There is no other way to the Resurrection except through suffering and death. How hard a lesson that is to learn! Hope in the midst of life's hardness - that is what keeps the horizon illumined and beckons me on. May the Risen Christ meet us all with joy and greet us with Peace.

Do write and let me know how you are.

Cordially yours,

19

To,

HH Baselius Geevarghese II Catholicos
Devalokam, Kottayam

I was in Rome when Bawa Thirumeni's letter arrived and I am grateful for all the good words that your Holiness has said about me. I would, however, like to make use of this opportunity to repeat my humble request conveyed to you before, that I should be given at least 10 years time to work out my own ideas in our Church. *Therefore once again with all humility and, earnestness, I should like to beg that my name be kept out of any list of nominations for election to the episcopate.* I am anxious to come back to India and begin work as early as I can in 1967, but *I am quite sure not only that I am unworthy of the episcopate,* but also that I have a sense of vocation to work among university students, laymen and theological students. If I get some time I would also like to write some books and produce other literature which will be helpful for our Church. I hope that Bawa Thirumeni and the Episcopal synod will permit me to work out some of these ideas.

20

METROPOLITAN PAULOS GREGORIOS

Principal, Orthodox Seminary

Post Box No. 98, Kottayam - 1

Kerala, India

It is ages since I wrote to my friends. I am glad for this opportunity to renew contact and give some news.

On February 15th, 1975 I took my vows as a monk, and was given the monastic habit as Hieromonk Paulos. On the 16th I was consecrated as a Metropolitan Bishop in the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East, by laying on of hands by the Holy Episcopal Synod, presided over by His Holiness Catholicos Baselius Augen I. I had been elected to the episcopate by unanimous vote of our Church Association (about 3000 delegates) in December 1965 and also again in October 1974.

My new name as bishop is Gregorios. Since the Syrian custom is to call all bishops by honorific *Mar*, I will be known as Bishop Paulos Mar Gregorios. I will not use my old name (Paul Verghese) any longer, except where legally necessary.

There has been no decision as yet about my episcopal assignment. It is hoped that I will be allowed to continue as Principal of the Seminary. My colleague and Vice Principal Fr. M. V. George was also consecrated as Bishop Geevargis Mar Eustathius, and another faculty colleague Revd. Dr. K. C. Thomas as Bishop Thomas Mar Makarios. These two colleagues may sooner or later leave the faculty to assume to diocesan responsibilities.

I hope to continue to maintain at least some of my international contacts and activities. My style of life will, however, has to be more ecclesiastical monastic, and therefore less adapted to "conferencing."

My church has been going through some very difficult times. The responsibility of a bishop in this Church now is quite heavy and onerous. I do not have the gifts or the discipline necessary for my office. I need your prayers very badly.

We are now in Lent Looking forward to the feast of the Risen Lord. The world also seems to be vaguely waiting for some form of resurrection life, life that is not threatened by death. We are in a time of upheaval, when dominant civilizations suffer the pangs of death and new ones are in pains to be born. No civilization comes to birth without a strong spiritual urge. It is the generation of this spiritual power through a proper community discipline that looks the first priority to me. We must look for that community and that discipline.

I have reduced much of my activities, since they are uncondusive to discipline. This year; for example, my tentative programme has the following trips outside India:

February - Singapore, March - Crete, April - Geneva. Sofia & Budapest. July - U.S.A. and Canada, August - Mexico City, September - Malaysia & Italy, November - December - Kenya, Africa.

How will I ever get the strength to pull myself out of every thing, in order to discipline myself?

I need your prayers, your affection your care and your communications.

Yours in Christ's Service.

Paulos Gregorios

21

THE DELHI ORTHODOX CENTRE
2, Institutional Area, Tughlaqabad
New Delhi -110 062

Dearly Beloved,

We have a sense of guilt and shame about what looks like our neglect of our beloved life members and friends, Without whose generous help this centre could not have come into being. We have had many staff changes recently and we hope to be able to get our main programmes moving in a few months, as more staff and volunteers join the centre.

Revd. Dr. K. M. George, a distinguished theologian - priest of our Church with a doctorate from the Sorbonne in Paris has now joined duty as honorary associate director. His main job is as Secretary for National Affairs of the National Council of Churches in India, with office and residence at our Centre. He lives here with his wife and two children. He came only in mid - july and as soon as he settles down, he will lead also the programme of the Centre.

His predecessor Fr. Joseph Vendrappilly who rendered yeoman service for one year at the Centre on a voluntary basis, has now gone as Vicar of our St. Thomas Church in Dubai.

We expect that a team of four or five volunteers from our Church, each with an M.S.W or M.com, will be joining the Centre in August - September. They will undertake first a comprehensive social development project in the neighbouring urban slums and possibly a rural development project outside Delhi. Deacon George Paulos, who took his degree of master of social Work from the university in Udaipur will lead the team, while continuing post graduate studies in Social Work at Delhi University. We shall write to you further as the plans develop.

Deacon K. G. Alexander takes of the centre, assisted by Koshy our new cook and Rikheram our houseboy and Watchman.

We have not yet been able to secure a permanent electric connection, and this hampers our work as also the fact that the road from Greater Kailash II remains unopened. But we will soon be in a position to take care of you better on your next visit to the Centre, with the help of our new volunteer workers.

I myself find the demands on my time increasing, while the physical capacity for work goes down as age advances. I still do too much travelling. This year I have been to China, the Philippines, the Soviet Union (twice), Poland, Ethiopia, Austria, Zaire, U.A.E., Hong Kong, Bulgaria etc. I still have three more trips abroad planned for this year and will, God willing, visit Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Iceland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Canada and U.S.A. Pray for me that my time and effort would be for the glory of God and for the good of humanity.

As I write these lines in the first week of August, two images of events whose anniversary falls on August 6th come before my eyes.

The first is Mount Tabor, the high mountain of Christ's transfiguration. Christ stands in the middle in divine - human glory with his garments and face shining with the lustre of the uncreated Light, transfigured to reveal the true destiny of the human person. On either side stand two other human beings, Moses and Elijah, equally transfigured and resplendent already in the glory that is human destiny. Then there are the three great Apostles Peter, James and John. They are weary and sleep-laden, unable to keep their eyes open or as yet to share the glory. Yet they see the vision and judge it to be good. They want to remain in the blessedness of the divine presence and suggest to Christ that they pitch three tents and settle down. But the vision fades and soon they are left with Jesus alone, still at prayer. Below the mountain is a more tragic scene, closer to our own reality. A large crowd; theologians and politicians arguing; a man with a son possessed of an unclean spirit; the apostles unable to drive out the evil spirit. Finally Christ comes, rebukes us all for our unbelief, and drives out the evil spirit himself.

In our nation, we seem to be badly possessed by the evil of communal mistrust and hatred; people foaming at the mouth, gritting their teeth, becoming stiff all over (see Mark 9:18), with hatred and the desire to kill. Some of our healers, instead of opening the eyes of the blind, tear out the eyes of those who see, in gross neglect and carelessness as in Khurja recently. We are a possessed people arguing ever, seldom praying. May Christ himself come and drive these evil spirits out.

The other image of Hiroshima, August 6th, 1945. Forty-one years ago, our Apocalypse began in that ominous mushroom cloud. The first atomic bomb had been given the frivolous name "Little Boy" and the B-29 plane which dropped it on Hiroshima was affectionately called Enola Gay, after the mother of Col. Paul Tibbets who flew it. That demon is not yet exorcised. In place of the "Little Boy" of Hiroshima and the "Fat Man" of Nagasaki three days later, (On my 23rd birthday) which together took more than a hundred thousand

lives, we have today in our arsenals at least 70,000 nuclear warheads, together a million times as powerful as the bombs of 1945. In addition we have now hundreds of thousands of tons of poison gas, and other deadly chemical weapons are being developed. Who will exorcise this demon of War, and restore humanity to sobriety, compassion and mutual care?

Pray. Pray that evil may not triumph, that peace with justice may prevail. God bless you and keep you. Write to us and share your thoughts with us.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios,

New Delhi

Feast of the Transfiguration, 1986

22

Dear Professor Heidegger,

I have for long wanted to come and see you, but never dared to ask you directly, both because I was afraid you would be too busy to see an unimportant enquirer like me and because my knowledge of the German language is woefully inadequate. But now I have been told by a friend, that her friend has enquired of you and that you were willing to receive me.

I hope to come and see you during the last week of June or on the 2nd of July. I shall let you know the precise date fairly soon.

I feel that you are one of the few highly developed minds in the west asking the right questions, and hence my interest in meeting with you. I am passionately interested in the quest for uncovering (Or unveiling myself to) the ground of all existence. Your *Dasein* analysis has been a light on my way. Even more helpful has been your primary question in what is *Metaphysics*.

I have a number of questions that I would like to put before you in order to understand you better:

(1) Are finitude and temporality inalienable aspects of being hu-

man, or can both be “overcome” in a genuinely antic sense in some form if authentic existence?

(2) The participation of the human *dasein* in being is both historical temporal and finite spatial. The conscious awareness of these aspects is perhaps essential to authentic existence. But can you think of a possibility of coming in to authentic existence without this conscious conceptual awareness of the nature of our *dasein*? What I have in mind is the question about the extent to which authentic existence itself is historically culturally conditioned. An Indian’s experience of authentic existence may be different from that of a European. Not simply that they may use different categories for conceptualising that experience, but the very content of that experience may be different because of the different culture and the different history. Do you agree?

(3) The *anamnesis of being* was what I understood your project to be. Are you disillusioned about the preparedness of western culture (as it was till about three years ago) to respond to your invitation to recall Being? Do you think that Western civilisation may in a few years soon be ready to start a “New Quest of Being”?

(4) Do you believe that the basic intent of Husserl’s phenomenology and that of your own Quest of Being belong to two different orders of knowledge? To put it in another way, did Husserl understand the interest of Kant’s Philosophy as you understand it? Are the quest for certainty in phenomenology and the quest for authenticity and unveiling of Being as you propose it, the same thing?

I hope these questions are not too muddled or based on wrong assumptions.

With my respects and looking forwards to seeing you soon.

Yours in the quest for wisdom,

Fr. Paul Varghese

June 13, 1973

23

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios
Metropolitan of Delhi and the North

St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral
C-3, Safdarjang Dvpt. Area
New Delhi - 110016, India

For several years now I have not managed to send a Christmas letter to you my friends. Many of you I have not seen or heard from for such a long time. I am always grateful for a friendship that survives such negligence on my part.

I have been a bishop now for five years, but I have neglected my flock, spending my time on a thousand preoccupations elsewhere. This year, i.e. in 1979, I made four visits to the U.S.A. - in January, March, July and October, three to the Caribbean (Jamaica, Cuba), five or six visits to Europe: in February (Holland), March (Finland, USSR), April (U. K., Germany), June (USSR), August (Germany, Austria), September (Rome, Geneva), October (Germany), one visit to Africa (May) another to Outer Mongolia (June). This means that during the first ten months of the year there was no month when I was not outside India for part of the time.

I wonder if this is the right thing to do. Should I sacrifice my ministry in India for the sake of my world ministry? I am not certain about any answer to that question. I gave a lot of my time this year to the World Council of Churches - Central & Executive Committees in Jamaica, Executive in Switzerland, the World Conference on Faith, Science and the Future at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass, U.S.A. (July 11-23). This last one was some sort of an achievement; hundreds of scientists and a few theologians speaking to each other for two weeks. We asked questions like: What is science? What does it do to human societies? What is its relation to faith? Can the two cooperate instead of fighting? What kind of ethical issues does science raise? What about energy, particularly nuclear energy? Should science be used for human mutual destruction? and so on. We hope the more than 30 papers presented and the fifteen or

so documents produced will soon be available for study and discussion in local groups. I was privileged both to be Chairman of the preparatory committee and to moderate the conference itself. The follow - up work will demand some time from me in 1980 and 81 also.

My visits to Cuba have opened my eyes to the reality of that heroic island nation, the first liberated territory in America, now followed by Nicaragua. The media seem determined to paint the blackest picture of Cuba, but what I saw was different - full of promise and hope, a heroic achievement of a heroic nation. Will shock you if I state my personal opinion that Fidel Castro's speech in the U. N. (representing the non-aligned) was more to the point from a Christian perspective than Pope John Paul II's presentation, both of them in October this year? Castro is really a world leader. I admire him and the Cuban people's achievements in eradicating illiteracy, in health distribution in equalization of income, in eliminating unemployment, in resisting the economic blockade and military attacks from the U. S. A., and in building the foundations of a just economy and an international socialist outlook in the people.

My visits to Outer Mongolia (Asian Buddhist Conference for peace) and to the desert monasteries of Egypt convinced me once again that monastic life, when alive can be a powerful force in transforming a people. It is still my ambition to spend several months in a desert monastery in Egypt training myself to be more effective in the spiritual combat in which I am presently engaged.

Another privilege this year was delivering the Dudley Lecture at Harvard on "A Reverse in the Trend of Secularization - Are we Ready?" My argument was that the secular flare in Protestant theology, with its roots in Gogarten and Bonhoeffer, was largely limited to the Soaring Sixties, when a spate of so-called secular theology books appeared; at the end of the sober Seventies the pendulum is swinging in the opposite direction - "the return of the sacred." But this is small comfort, since the sacred takes bizarre and unhealthy new forms. The Christian church must re-think and recreate its symbolic structure, and its community life. These two are primary - not any theology. Theology must arise out of the community life and

its symbol structure. Harvard Theological Review is supposed to publish the lecture next year.

I raised the question in my address to the mammoth U.N. Conference on Science and Technology for Development (Vienna, August) whether the concept of Development should not also include some attention to structures of meaning for human existence.

This business of Science, Technology and the Secular on one hand, and faith, meaning, tranquillity and transcendence on the other, have to be philosophically reconciled. This is my passionate interest now.

I am grateful to all of you who keep writing. Please let me know your thoughts and aspirations. I still learn more from people than from books.

God has been good to me - granting me good health and many opportunities. I still have no proper place in New Delhi in which to live and work but I hope something will soon materialize. I hope to welcome you in my residence in New Delhi by 1981, if all goes well and if my friends and well wishers help me to build a place.

God bless you all with peace and joy.

1979 Dec

24

It is a long time since I sent you one of these round robins. I see some of you around the world more often than I can write to you.

I am no longer much good at giving news of myself. Nothing strikes me as particularly newsworthy, including my recent visit to China as a tourist (August 1983) or my election at Vancouver (Aug. 1983, on my 61st birthday) as one of the seven presidents of the World Council of Churches. Not even my being (July 1983) a spectator at a fire-walking ceremony of the African Orthodox Church on the San Francisco beach, or my half-hour conversation with our Prime Minister Indira Gandhi when I could speak frankly with her about the problems facing India.

In my more anxious moments I could share with others my physi-

cal needs - for example, the need to find another \$ 250,000 to complete the half-finished Orthodox Centre in Delhi which is eventually to be my residence and workspot in the national capital; my desperate need for atleast \$ 50,000 to complete the Poor Boy's Home and Industrial Training Centre in Kerala, and the need to find some money to build a women's hostel and staff quarters at our Seminary.

Perhaps you could help me in another need - not my need alone, but the need of the World Council of Churches to find a new general secretary. We have to make a decision in the summer of 1984. Dr. Philip Potter has made known his intention to leave as soon as possible, and I am a member of the Search Committee to find suitable candidates for the secession. It is a difficult task. At a crucial period in the history of the ecumenical movement, which began with the Second Vatican Council (1962), the W.C.C. according to me, took some decisive initiatives, but was daunted by the big problems which began to emerge in the late 60's, after the initial honeymoon period. The W.C.C. went on the defensive, as the Roman Catholic Church showed symptoms of desiring some distance from it. The end result is great pressure towards establishing the Protestant identity of the WCC and towards insisting on Protestant leadership of the Ecumenical Movement. Neither of these pressures augur well for the future of the movement itself. And we need a general secretary who can see this problem and do something about it. May be you can help us to find such a person.

I still divide my time, somewhat equally (one-third each) between the diocese in Delhi, the Seminary in Kottayam (spanning more than 3000 Kilometers of travel one way), and my still too numerous responsibilities abroad. And I try to do some writing. My ambition about a book tracing the relation between modern western philosophy, Liberal Christianity and contemporary Marxism, still remains largely an ambition. If I could get three undisturbed months and a good library, I think I can complete it. The third edition of my *Human Presence* is almost sold out. I did that book in about 4 weeks of concentrated reading and writing - at the Gregorian and other libraries in Rome.

My health is good - generally, with the exception of my teeth. The Grace of God is abundant; but the cloud of darkness is also real.

There is a lot that I must unknow before I can really know. Will my growing loneliness be the means of shedding much of my conceptual knowledge, in order that I may find truth in His love, which embraces all and dispels all loneliness? Lonely, but not bored. Undisciplined, but still persisting. Still striving for recognition and admiration, but convinced that they are both futile, and that love alone matters. In the evening of life I am grateful that He has given me the grace to be able to welcome death as a friend making me almost eager to pass through that door. I wonder; how will my present concerns for justice and peace look from the other side of that door? Meanwhile the world suffers from poverty and injustice, war and preparation for war; and I cannot remain indifferent.

That is already much too long a letter, and I must conclud. I think of you often. It is good to talk to you. I need your prayers and good wishes. God bless you.

25

My dear George and George Achen,

I have read your joint letter of March 1994 with some interest, and heartily reciprocate your kind Easter greetings.

I see that you want to hold another consultation on the participation of the Orthodox churches in the WCC. I have only a remote interest in the subject now, because I do not have reason to expect much creative leadership, i.e. Christian leadership with vision and imagination, from the WCC.

I do not have the time to set forth in sufficient detail my basic insights about the Ecumenical Movement in general and the WCC in particular. I will just jot down a few things, in the form of brief statements.

1. The unity of the One church, the one body of Jesus Christ, belongs to the very foundation of the Christian faith. By the very nature of the Church it has to be united and one. This we confess in the Creed, and this I believe.

2. But the unity of the Church does not mean simply the unity of all

Christians living now. We have to be one with the Church of all ages and all places. This means continuity with the Apostolic Church and its Apostolic witness. Most churches at present are not fully faithful to that tradition and heritage. The orientation of the Ecumenical Movement should not be to go after the latest fad, but to rediscover and live in greater fullness the Apostolic heritage, which can truly unite us in Christ.

3. True unity is in the good, and the more we live in accordance with the total commitment to Christ and to His universal compassion, the more united we will be as churches. This is why renewal in the church and in personal lives is basic to the ecumenical movement. There can be no unity without renewal. It is the Spirit of God who unites us in the good. There is so much evil in our churches and in the WCC, which hampers and hinders their work for unity. Some self-assessment of a deeper kind than what goes on now, is needed both in the churches and in the WCC.

4. The Protestant leadership of the WCC puts a higher priority on their hanging on to that leadership, than to the unity of the Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches on the basis of the Apostolic witness. So long as this distorted power hunger remains, there is little possibility of the WCC functioning as a privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement.

5. There are some important issues facing humanity which the WCC should take up on a priority basis. The most important is laying the foundations for a new and more humane civilisation to replace the present inhuman urban technological - industrial - consumerist - nuclear - development alist civilisation, of which the disrupted life environment and war are two major products. The WCC leadership lacks the will and the vision to make the churches pick this up as an ecumenical task - including an examination of the theoretical foundations of all our academic disciplines and of our science and technology. There are other issues - like moving towards some universally acknowledged principles, not moral laws, but some basic principles like love and compassion, integrity and truth, justice and peace, with middle axioms and civil and social laws derived from them - for humans (not

just Christians) living together in Koinonia on this planet, a total restructuring of the visible structures of international coherence like the UN system, The TNCs, the emerging unjust global single economy and its institutions and structures, the initiation of new structures to make just international laws and to administer and adjudicate them, i.e. international legislative bodies, executive structures, peace - keepig bodies, and judiciary systems. Neither the churches nor the WCC seem equipped to handle these questions more than superficially.

6. The ecumenical movement needs a new kind of leadership - decentralised and distributed in different parts of the globe - not bureaucratic offices, but of praying ecumenical communities, living and sharing in koinonia. The bureaucratic pattern does not fit, either for Church leadership, or for WCC operations. We have to make full use of our best lay leadership, both female and male, but not let loose some feverish activists furiously tearing each other and themselves apart. We need wise, loving and compassionate, knowledgeable and skilled people to lead us in this critical period of our history, people who fear God, who can pray together, who love each other, which is not the case now. The shift of leadership from bureaucracy to a global koinonia of local koinonias is an urgent need.

7. The question of culture must receive urgent and better informed attention. The present treatment does not take up the real issues: e.g. culture as identity for persons and groups, the cultural imperialism of certain cultures, the role of inter-religious co-operation and mutual understanding as a way to learn to live together in pluralistic societies and to pave the way for a united humanity, the relation of culture, not some abstract entity called "the Gospel", but to the Kingdom of God and to ultimate reality.

8. Another important ecumenical issue is the growing alienation between the organized main line churches and their people. So many, especially among the young and the learned, are opting for a life with minimum association with the organized church. There is a new and dangerous quest for "spirituality without religion" which is replacing yesterday's "Religionless Christianity." A great "spiritual" egoism and an unjustifiable individualist quest for one's own private peace and salvation lurk behind this anti-social, anti- communitarian movement.

But there is some justification for people revolting against the life of the organized church. This should be a prime concern for the WCC.

9. As for the questions you have posed I have only few things to say. On relation to RCC, that is another power group with its own power game, but much more experienced in that game than the WCC. It will be good to make a study of why the WCC-RCC relationship, which started off with great hopes in 1962, became rather unproductive and formal by 1970. I believe that the power game played by one WCC official to bring down the RCC to the level of one of the Reformed churches backfired. I believe also that both Paul VI and John Paul II saw the Protestant churches as a bad influence, undermining some of the cherished RC realities such as opposition to artificial birth control, clerical celibacy, the monastic vocation, and submission to the Magisterium. The RCC gently closed its doors to the Reformation churches around the mid-seventies or even earlier. The way the dominant Protestant leadership was treating the Orthodox churches gave some ideas to the RCC as to what would happen to them if they came inside despite their great and massive strength. Meanwhile the Reformation tradition began moving further and further away from the Apostolic heritage; this confirmed the RC desire to protect itself from such influences by keeping the doors closed as much as possible.

10. The WCC's present agenda is certainly not of the churches, but of some activists who pick up the latest fads. On important issues like the environment or the one single global market, the WCC does not do any serious research through competent and knowledgeable people, but becomes quite satisfied with a few slogans. The question of the persistence and growth of poverty and injustice in the world as well as the growth of militarism and the arms trade gets very little informed attention. The role of science and technology in shaping our world has now been pushed back to a back burner. The element of study and research in the ecumenical community as a whole does not seem to have too many advocates either on the staff or in the Committee structures. This applies across the board—Unity, Mission and Diakonia. Of course I do not quite understand the difference between Mission and Diakonia.

On the question of what alienates the Orthodox churches from the WCC, I would not put women's ordination issues at the top. It is the general lack of respect for the Apostolic Tradition, great differences in the attitudes towards the Church as a Divine - Human reality, towards the mysteries of the Church, the functional approach of the Reformation towards the Ministry, - these seem to me the basic factors, in addition to a lack of sensitivity in general to what the Orthodox regard as sacred, including the sanctification of time and of space.

These are just some ideas that come to my mind. The WCC was once a great force. It is not longer so, and the WCC better recognise the reasons for that and do something radical about it. Otherwise not only History, but even our Lord Himself may leave it behind.

Christ is risen. God bless you both.

Yours in Christ,

26

Highly Esteemed General Secretary Gorbachev,

Permit us to send you warm greetings on behalf of the 73 participants from 27 countries in Asia, Africa, North and South America, the Middle East, and Eastern and Western Europe in the International Round Table Conference of Religious Workers and Scientific Experts, meeting now in Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Orthodox Church, following, up the ideas of the World Conference: Religious Workers for saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe (Moscow 1982). Our conference has convinced us again that dialogue and cooperation between religious people and secular experts are not only useful, but imperative in our nuclear age.

It is with profound satisfaction and great joy that we have heard that the USSR has decided to further extend its unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests till August 6, 1986, - the day of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

This is one more testimony to the whole world that the Soviet Union is aware of its responsibility to humanity and that its leaders

and people sincerely seek to lessen and eventually remove the threat of a nuclear war.

It is a matter of great regret that the United States administration has not built upon the positive spirit of the Geneva Summit, and failed to take the chance to improve relations between East and West; it has shown disrespect for international law and the United Nations and continues its dangerous plans for nuclear superiority and the Strategic Defense Initiative. Furthermore, it has shown no positive response to the proposal for a world without nuclear weapons by the end of this century.

Our 'Round Table' - the fourth of its kind - is devoted now to one of the most burning issues of today: 'Hunger, Poverty and the Arms Race - Towards a New Moral Order Within and Among Nations.' We Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims and secular participants in the Conference, are united by the feeling of identification with and compassion for the millions of people who live in hunger and poverty. None of us can remain indifferent to the fact that millions of children and adults die of hunger every year, while colossal amounts are wasted on the development and production of ever more sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. We have sought to analyze this problem in depth, to reflect on a new moral order to be established in relations between peoples and nations, and to determine and recommend additional practical steps to be taken by religious circles and others seeking to defend the sacred gift of life and the dignity of the human person.

We are especially inspired by the expressed willingness of the USSR and several other countries to re-allocate the gigantic funds to be released by stopping the wasteful arms race both to meeting domestic needs and to providing aid for nations and people in need.

We fully support your proposals to start reducing the nuclear stockpiles immediately, to stop all nuclear tests, and to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. We would welcome the prompt implementation of this or a similar programme, negotiated and implemented multilaterally.

Gathered here in Moscow we wish to express our profound sympathy with the people of the Soviet Union for the accident that occurred recently at the Chernobyl atomic power station. We express also our solidarity with all those abroad who at this time of trial have rendered moral and material support to the Soviet people. It has proved once again that humanity has and can have no boundaries.

It is of course deplorable that this disaster was used for political propaganda purposes. Nuclear accidents have occurred in many countries before. No accident whether to Chernobyl, APS or to the Challenger space launch, should be an occasion for anyone to rejoice. What is needed is to undertake a reassessment of the risks of nuclear energy and to explore more decisively alternate energy programmes.

We fully share the conclusions that the Soviet Union has drawn from the accident i.e. the need to establish an international regime for safe development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to arrange an international mechanism for prompt mutual assistance in case of dangerous developments. We are convinced that religious peace circles throughout the world will give all possible support to the implementation of these noble proposals. We warmly welcome the way in which you have linked the new awareness created by this accident, with the enormously greater risk of nuclear weapons.

We warmly wish you General Secretary Gorbachev, blessed success in your untiring efforts for the good of the peoples of the Soviet Union, for promoting peace on earth, and for conserving all life from annihilation.

With respectful regards, on behalf of the participants of the Conference:

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios
Philaret

Metropolitan

27

Your Excellency,

With deep respect we inform you that on March 18-20, 1987, 100 distinguished personalities representing Buddhism, Christianity, Islam,

Judaism, Sikhism, and the community of scientists discussed the issues of common security, moral and ethical values at the round table meeting in Moscow, USSR.

When deliberating on the steps which could introduce a process of irreversible disarmament, the participants in the Round Table Conference expressed their approval and support of your proposals to separate the question of medium-range missiles in Europe from the whole disarmament package and to reach agreement on it immediately. They understand that these proposals are in full agreement with the plans from Reykjavik according to which the USSR and the USA would dismantle their mediumrange missiles in Europe within the period of five years. This would drastically reduce the nuclear threat in Europe promote confidence and support the process of removing other types of armaments from the European region.

We assure you that we shall address the Churches and religious groups with an appeal to provide you with their moral support in every step you and your government take towards disarmament and to the abolition of all nuclear arms.

We wish you all the necessary health and strength to perform your political responsibility to your country and your people.

Sincerely Yours,

Metropolitan PAULOS MAR GREGORIOS
FILARET

Metropolitan

28

January 1, 1992

My Dear Friend,

It is about time that I produced one of these round robins. I have been guilty or negligence or something like that in the matter of personal correspondence.

The New Year has come. It seems difficult to wish Peace and Joy to the whole of humanity in 1992 and to have faith that the wish will come true. I wish that God may grant you both inner joy and

peace, even in the midst of humanity's many afflictions, anxieties and problems. To rejoice in the midst of many sufferings, both one's own and other', is perhaps better for us than a life without problems.

As for myself, only a few changes. I am a few years older than I was when I wrote my last circular letter, but I think old age could be a blessing if only people would let others rest. This year I will, God willing, complete three score years and ten.

I have laid down my responsibilities, such as they were, as a President of the World Council of Churches in Canberra in February 1991. It was not a particularly creative situation for me - WCC leadership was afraid that I was not conforming to their expectations, and of course I had the same worries about the WCC. Before I joined the staff of the WCC in 1961, I thought the organisation was too Western and too Protestant. But afterwards I learned to appreciate it as something unique - quite an unparalleled forum for reflecting on global human problems at the peoples' level, and sometimes to do something about these problems. With little money it achieved some big things in this sphere. Mostly because then they had the expertise to bring the experts and peoples representatives together. I got a big education from all this and I am very grateful.

As for the unity of the churches, the WCC promoted better understanding between the Orthodox and the Protestants, helped transform the Roman Catholic Church, and served also as a forum for the Protestants to act globally. At times it provided such fora for the Orthodox also. Without the WCC, we Orthodox would have been too isolated from each other. Thirty years of association with the leadership of the WCC has taught me many lessons. I think I may be wiser now than thirty years ago, but certainly I am not very optimistic about the Christian Ecumenical Movement, whether globally or in India.

I devote more time these days to inter-religious work. I am now on the Council for the World Parliament of Religions (Chicago), and was privileged to give the inaugural address at the 1990 opening ceremony in Chicago for the four year long centenary celebrations of the first so-called World Parliament of Religions (1893), where Swami

Vivekananda made a big splash in the West. 1993 is going to be a big year for inter-religious relations - special events in more than thirty countries.

I am also Executive President of the Inter Religious Federation for World Peace, as well as Patron of the International Religious Foundation and the Council for the World's Religions. These three are organisations founded and funded by the controversial Revd. Sun Myung Moon of Korea. He is also head of the Unification Church, which claims to continue the unfinished work of Jesus Christ, but is not accepted as a Christian Church by most Christians including myself. Many allegations are made against Mr. Moon and the Moonies as his disciples are called, pejoratively. Most of these charges have been found to be totally baseless. The authoritative outsider study by British Sociologist Ms. Eileen Barker, Dean of Undergraduate Studies at the London School of Economics, seems to be little known to people.

I find these organisations doing more useful inter-religious work than the WCC or the Vatican, or any other body I know. I am quite happy to be associated with these and other related organisations, without any involvement in the Unification Church itself. Many of my friends misunderstand me at this point, but such misunderstanding has in the past not stopped me from associating with odd fellows like the Communists or the Rastafarians. I respect people's right to misunderstand: sometimes it seems a desperate need for some to do so. But I also think that it will be healthier for them to understand more correctly. Neither the WCC nor the Vatican's pontifical Council on Inter-faith Dialogue nor, for that matter, the World Conference of Religions for Peace (Geneva) has been able to give me sufficient reasons for their taboo against Moon-related organisations, it seems, rather strange that while there is a mushrooming of inter-religious organisations, they cannot cooperate with each other. And most of them are committed to world peace and intercultural harmony!

In my diocese I have now an Assistant Metropolitan, His Grace Job Mar Philoxenos, who now does the administration and pastoral care for people in the 50 parishes and congregations stretching from

London to Lucknow much better than I could have done. But that does not, alas, decrease the volume of my work for my own church. I am still Principal of the Orthodox Seminary in Kottayam, and now also Secretary to the Holy Episcopal Synod. I have to go to Kerala (3000 kilometers to the south of Delhi) practically every month. And it seems I have to travel abroad for various international conferences about 10 times a year. I still give sometime to the 120 poor children in Kerala and about the same number in the poor quarter of Delhi, of all religions (ages 6 to 16) whom we feed and educate. All that adds up, and I will be 70 this year; I am still disabled from the prolapse two years ago of my two vertebrae in the lumbar region. God gives me by His infinite grace the strength to go on. He may also, if He so pleases, give me, sometime in the future, also more competent assistants in Delhi and Kottayam. I would like to retire from my administrative responsibilities at the end of this year, If God wills.

And the shape of the world is not particularly cheering. For the oppressed and exploited, hope recedes continually; frustration mounts in intensity; mindless violence bursts forth in self-destructive anger. The might of big money, military muscle and the technological money-making mind, seems to take over, while justice and democracy always continue to recede. The cry of humanity for Peace with Justice is muzzled and muted. People and nations are bought off for a mess of pottage. Even in what was once Socialist Soviet Union, today people will do anything for bread and sausage. Socialism has become a taboo word in many countries. Peace movements, to which I once devoted a lot of my time, are not in fashion any more. Terrorism and war alone seem never to run short of money or recruits. The night of evil is daunting indeed.

And what has happened to socialism and the hope for social justice? The first Socialist state of history has committed suicide. There is no superpower left to take up the cudgels on behalf of the millions of victims of oppression and injustice in the world. Gorbachev, the great statesman who made history take a tour de force, has not only managed to create an amazing mess in so many economies, but also has left the poor without an armed and strong defender. Perhaps that is all for the good. The oppressed had been enfeebled by too much

dependence on the Soviet Union. Now they will have to organise themselves and learn to learn more on people's power and God's power. If they do not, eventually the oppressor too is bound to suffer, because fascism seems to be around the corner in many countries.

Socialism will survive, because it means the quest for peace with justice and dignity for all. It will have to take untried forms, and depend less on state power. Eventually socialism must provide the base for a new civilization which replaces our present godless, secular, urban-technological civilisation. As for Gorbachev, his failures are as tragic as his achievements are great.

We now need to lay the foundations for a more democratic global community of nations where no nation or group of nations is able to dominate, oppress or threaten the others. We must move boldly towards a world without weapons of mass destruction and with a global structure caring for the life environment on this planet. The same global structure should provide also for adjudicating and peacefully setting all international conflicts; as well as for justly adjusting global trade terms and technology transfers, without making science-technology or information a saleable commodity in an unjust market. "Intellectual property" should be a shocking concept for decent intellectuals, as well as for ordinary people. Science's once great claim to be public will have to be strongly reaffirmed. As we make some progress in these, other things to do will become more evident.

My basic mood is still one of tempered optimism. I refuse to be afraid of bullies, whether they be Asian, American or European. God is still in full charge, and the way of Christ is to resist evil with good, not afraid of being clobbered in the process.

I plan to be in America in May (America Psychiatric Association lecture), in Brazil in the first half of June (UNCED, Rio), Korea in August, and again in America in October (Goshen College)

Please pray for my work and keep writing to me; it brings a lot of encouragement. May God bless you and give you the sense of His presence.

Yours for Peace with Justice.

Paulos Mar Gregorios

29

December 17, 1993

My dear Shri Venkataraman,

I have great pleasure in reporting to you that the World Congress of Spiritual Concord in Rishikesh (December 6 to 12) was, by special divine grace, unusually effective and life-changing for all participants, irrespective of the religion or country to which one belonged.

The Vanaprasth Ashram is a place of remarkable spiritual energy, nestled between the Himalayas on three sides and the Holy Ganga on the fourth. Accommodation and simple vegetarian food was of such high quality as people would not anticipate in a Hindu Ashram.

We, more than 200 pilgrims went there to seek a spiritual vision of the True and Eternal, the Life-giving Light of the Divine. Our quest was for Spiritual Concord, not for intellectual agreement through discussion and debate. So the means we used was Meditation, Music and Dance - not listening to speeches and lectures.

At the opening function, when there were a few speeches, we received blessings from Swami Chidananda Sarasvati of Shivananda Ashram, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Acharya Sushil Kumarji, and other Sanths and Saints.

Padma Bhushan Sonal Mansingh led us in our symbolic quest by staging a super-performance on Ekataa. Obviously she put her heart and spirit into it, and all of us were deeply touched by the vibrant spirituality of Sonalji's multi-media presentation, and by her extremely enlightening workshop the next day about using the body as a means of expressing the spiritual.

Karuamayi Devi of Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Delhi took us aloft into the celestial spheres of cosmic music and heavenly symphony. She initiated us into the rich fervour of authentic Bhakti singing with its rapturous joy and careless abandonment of oneself in the Divine. We all sang with her, forgetful of all our differences. We sang with the Sufi Kalam of Kamdar Aman of the Panjabi Academy, and danced a light Sufi dance with our Sufi Sister Zia from America. Brother

Robert of Sivananda Ashram, Jain Sisters from Acharya Tulsi's Ashram led by Saman Sister Madhur Prajan, Kabir Saxena of the Tushita Mahayana Buddhist Centre in Delhi, Sister Shanti of the Brahmakumaris, Swami Chidananda Saraswati of Paramarth Niketan, Swami Dr. Rama of the Swami Rama Ashram, Sister Zia from America of the Sufi Tradition, Vandana Mataji and Dr. Gregorios of two quite different Christian Traditions, Mr. A. K. Merchant of the Baha'i National Spiritual Assembly, Mr. Setthi of the Ruhani mission - all these led us in meditation, according to some dozen different spiritual traditions of the world. It surprised us that all of us, irrespective of religion or nationality, felt ourselves united in the joy of the Presence of the Transcendent. We now know that far more important and effective than discursive interreligious dialogue, is this way of living together, praying and singing and sometimes dancing together, but above all meditating together, according to different spiritual traditions.

On our last day we were in Delhi, visiting holy places and houses of worship in the Delhi area. The climax was the lunch reception given by Baba Virsa Singhji, one of our patrons, in the paradisiac gardens of Gobind Sadan in South Delhi, Babaji, a near illiterate, a towering lofty figure in white, spoke to us amazingly rich words of wisdom from all the traditions of the world. Mr. Surendra Nath, the Governor of Punjab, who is a disciple of Babaji, translated into English the profound wisdom of this great spiritual Master and Healer.

It is our hope that the Rishikesh experience would be used by networks all over the world, of course with some necessary modifications. We hope soon to have video-tapes available for the use of groups all over the world. Our hope is that a world-wide network of such centres will continue to generate waves of spiritual energy through prayer and meditation, thus giving rise to a large wave of spiritual power, for the healing of the nations, and for the spiritual transformation of the human global community.

We have issued a Rishikesh Appeal, addressed to all nations and peoples. I am sending you a copy of the appeal and of the over-all programme.

I wish to thank you on behalf of all the participants for your gracious patronage and support.

Gratefully Yours,

30

13th December 1988

Dear Sri. Vijayan,

Thank you for your Letter which the Soviet Land people forwarded to me.

I want to help you as much as I can. I am sending you a cheque for Rs. 250/- for the immediate medical needs of your family. If you need assistance for the treatment of your blindness. I will need a certificate that it is curable and would need a specific course of treatment, and specifying the cost of treatment. If your daughter needs treatment for Tuberculosis I would need to know what treatment and how much it costs.

I have no funds to assist in the construction of a house, but when you begin construction I shall try to help you in a small way.

God bless you and heal you.

Your's in Christ,

31

10 JUNE 1993

“This is only to report to all concerned that by the grace of God, I am progressing remarkably well in this catholic hospital where everyone is most kind and takes good care of me. Our people, especially Mr. & Mrs. Thomas and Korah Varghese Achen looking after my needs.

As you know, I had a stroke while travelling from Oxford to Cologne on May Twentyninth for attending a very important five-day symposium with leading world physicists on the foundations of theoretical physics held June 1-5 at the high energy physics Institute of the University of Cologne, which I was very sorry to miss.

I was carried directly to this hospital by our people, from the cologne airport. I was actually supposed to stay in the Guestroom of this hospital. For Qurbana in cologne for our people on pentecost Sunday instead I was admitted to the emergency clinic that was going on, Saturday evening at seven thirty P.M.

At first after observing ECG irregularity, the doctors suspected cardiac problem. I was in intensive care for twentyfour hours. Heart is still under observation and so far normal. There is total paralysis of the left half of the body, but, God be praised - no impairment of speech or any brain functions. I am typing this message with my one (right) hand which is normal. Paralysed left side already beginning to improve with slight motor function coming back to left knee and shoulder. Getting very good physiotherapy will probably have to stay in this friendly, well equipped and well run catholic hospital. For another week or more and then move to a rehabilitation centre in Germany for a few weeks. I am still hoping to get back to India by mid-July if the Lord permits.

It may interest you to know that the staff in this 300 bed hospital is very international. The lady who cleans my room every day is a bosnian muslim with three children of her own, the chief physician Dr. Georg, from Trier, Germany is kind, unusually friendly and competent. The assistant doctor Wieberova, from Poland, is very kind and caring. There are ten or so Malayalees working here including three Roman Catholic sisters from Kerala. One of the nurses attending me is a turkish muslim girl doing one year of voluntary service here. Invariably everyone is kind to me.

I am not yet well. Enough to receive many visitors or talk for a long time. Neither is it good for me to receive many telephone calls. The best way to contact me is by the above fax number. Kindly pass on a photocopy of this message to Bawa thirumeni and also to the seminary. I have no objection to your publishing the information. Please ask someone at the seminary to contact me by fax and give me all news. I had written to them shortly before I fell sick.”

With Warmest Greetings.

Paulos Mar Gregorios

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Dec. 4, 1994

To,

Mr. Rajan George, Delhi - 21

I can walk only with great concentration, and if anyone touches my body, I lose balance and fall. It has happened to me several times, but only with my people, who always try to show me that they want to help, but never looked after me during my entire sickness. Nobody has come to ask me whether I need any special treatment or help. I have managed my own treatment. I called together my priests in the Delhi area, and asked them to find someone who could look after me. They did nothing. I found someone from outside my community, a Hindu who was good, but my people drove him away saying that he had chicken pox and shut him up in my own house. I was as helpless as before.

I wrote this much since you asked. I have many complaints about my people's failure to help me in my work or to look after me in my sickness. I am still suffering because of my people's lack of care for a man who has worked hard for them and who is now unable to use his left hand for the past 18 months or more.

To you, I would give the humble advice to understand before you judge. You will be doing me a service if you can tell all our people that I am a bad man, and that they should not try to help me. Then I would not have to fall or wet myself so often.

Ps. You may show this letter to any priest or laymen according to your discretion. Let them also find out how bad I am!

33

May 10, 1995

My Dear Mathukkutty,

I am here in Florida USA, undergoing a two week treatment in Cranio Sacral Therapy at the Research Institute of Dr. John Upledger,

a member of the US Government's special team for Alternative Therapy. It is one of the newly emerging therapies for people with chronic back problems. It seems the method has so far been successful in more than 80% of the cases. It is my last chance for a permanent cure, and since they had already tried everything possible in Delhi Hospitals, and they had covered up Allopathic ignorance by simply diagnosing it as Polymyalgia Arthritica, and putting me on steriods, which is now ruining my bladder control and diabetcic sugar control; life became rather impossible in Delhi since there was no one in the Diocese who could look after my treatment needs. I felt very much like an orphan and did not want to fall a victim to the Church's callous lack of care for its bishops - Pachomius Thirumeni was the last victim of that carelessness.

It was a great risk to undertake the long trip to Miami unaccompanied. And I did pay the price. In Rome after I had boarded the Alitalia plane for Miami and taken my seat in Business Class, the Captain of the Flight told me that I was physiologically unfit to travel. They offloaded me in Fiumicino Airport and took me to a hospital. I had been drenched with urine, resulting from my bladder incontinence, which had become quite bad with the Steriods. I could have gotten through the transit in Rome all right if they had given me the facilities to change planes without making me stand very long, and also making me climb up the many steps to the big Miami plane no my own. Anyway all they did in the hospital was to take away my clothes and sterilise them, and also wash and sterilize my body also. They gave me a change of (horrible) clothes and whisked me to the NewYork plane that was leaving at 1230. What with a three hour wait in Kennedy Airport, after immigration and customs clearance, I got to Miami at 2130 hours. Our Achen was waiting for me and I got to my hotel room at 30 minutes past midnight, after having been on the road for more than 48 hours. I had not been able to take my insulin and other medicines all day Sunday; in Palm Beach Gardens, I slept for some 15 hours and woke up totally without energy and quite helpless. The Achen here, Fr. Joy Pyngolil and others have been taking good care of me. I began my treatment on Tuesday, and even after only one session, I already feel better. There is every possibility that I will be healed here in two weeks.

I have laid down all my church administrative duties as of May 1, 1995. I have not given charge to Mar Philoxenos, because I had no instruction to do so from the Synod. But my view does not count in our Church; it is easy to spoil a diocese, which has been built up with great self-sacrifice on the part of our people and priests. perhaps I have also contributed something to the building up of the diocese and its 30 churches. I plan to stay on at the Delhi Orthodox Centre, and continue to work with Sophia Society, Sarva Dharma Nilaya and Niti Santhi Kendra. I may also develop some new projects, in order to continue to use my limited talents and experience.

If I am well in the next few weeks, I have a major lecture to deliver at Vanderbilt University in Nashville Tennessee, and read a paper in a Toronto meeting in the first week of June. According to present plans I should be back in Kottayam by June 14th and stay for two weeks, to do some things for the Seminary. Whenever the authorities in the Church feel that somebody else can do the Principal's Job better, they would not have to dismiss me; just appoint another person, and I will readily hand over charge.

I think that some day should come here for treatment. So few doctors in this country or in ours have even heard about the Upledger Institute. But it is a proven success, and I will send you details if needed. I hope your own health is good.

If any part of this letter is of interest to others, you may publish the

All good wishes and blessings

Paulos Mar Gregorios

34

July 7, 1993

My dear Mathukutty,

Blessings and greetings to you from this rehabilitation centre in a resort town in the high hills of Wittgensteiner Forest in central Germany. I moved here on July 5th, and have settled down comfortably in a fourth floor corner room overlooking the rolling green hills and

the charming town of Bad Laasphe, about one hour drive up the mountain from the university town of Marburg. They have all kinds of rehabilitation therapy here, including many kinds of massage, mudpacks herbal and mineral baths, physiotherapy of ten different kinds. I have already made some progress in the two days I have been here. I plan to be here till at least the end of July. The cost of my stay and treatment here is being met by the Evangelical Church in Germany, at the personal request of Dr. Konrad Reiser, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. As you know the Catholic Hospital in Wuppertal bore the enormous five weeks hospital cost with all doctors' fees, medicines and tests included. The Protestants will pay my four weeks bill here. I am grateful to the Christian churches of Germany for all their goodness to me.

My health has been improving very fast, by the grace of God. I can do most of my personal chores myself now, without much difficulty. I get up from bed without help, go to the bathroom, brush my teeth and take a shower, dry myself, and put on most of my clothes, all with one hand, without any help. That is tremendous progress over the last few days. The left knee is very weak, and I can only walk a few steps, and that too with great care and concentration. I can lift the left arm a few inches, but cannot pick up even a piece of paper with it. The half paralysis will still take several weeks to heal. There are no Malayalees or Syrian Christians anywhere near here, but the staff of the Rehabilitation clinic is taking excellent care of all my needs. There are several doctors here who are specialists. I am looked after by the Chief Physician Dr. Donau, a friendly and competent German from Romania. He comes to see me three times a day. I have to deal with all the staff here in German, since most of them do not speak English. They are giving me VIP treatment, and go out of their way to please me, and have already invited me to stay here beyond the four weeks if necessary, especially since they saw the following letter.

Three days ago I had this lovely letter from Dr. Richard von Weizsaecker, the President of the German Republic. He has been a good friend for more than thirty years. As you probably know, when he visited India last year, he invited me to lunch and I had a good long

conversation with him in Madras. I give below the English translation of his personal letter to me (in German) dated July st, 1993, from Bonn:

“Your Eminence, my beloved and honoured friend,

It is with a great sense of sorrow that I have read that you have to spend a considerable amount of time in the St. Joseph Hospital in Wuppertal. This disturbs me unusually, and I hope very much that your health has been improving steadily in the meantime.

As for the expenses for your treatment, the office of the Federal President had taken up contact with various institutions. I am glad that a solution has now been found, which will relieve you of all anxiety on that count.

Personally, With my whole heart, I wish that you make fast progress in recovering your health, and that you will soon be well enough to undertake the journey back home.

In heartfelt sympathy, I am, with my best wishes and greetings,

Your Richard Weizsaecker”

He is a man for whom I have the greatest respect and affection despite our differences in political and economic views. Alas, he may not stay very long as Bundespresident. He is one of the few good people in high office in the world.

Could you kindly ask your office to give one copy of this to Bawa Thirumeni and one to the Seminary. I get somany good letters and phone calls every day, including one from P C Alexander and Accamma. Would you also give my new address and phone number to the Governor’s PA in Bombay. Does he have a fax? Otherwise P J Koshy can pass it on.

Thank you indeed for sending me Manorama. It takes about a week to reach Wuppertal, and they are forwarding mail to me here. I could understand the Harshad Mehta - One crore scandal better because of your excellent coverage. Did you know that Sat Pal Mittal is a man whom I knew very well and worked with in the organisation called “Global Forum for Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders” of

which he was co-president? Of course I would not vouch for his integrity or that of his sons, who are all big money-makers, and who would not hesitate to use service organisations to advance their own personal interests.

Affectionately,

Paulos Mar Gregorios

35

17 - 3 - 1995

Your Holiness,

I wish most humbly to communicate to you a decision which I have arrived at, after great deal of prayer and soul searching.

As you all know, my health is still not very good. I have to protect myself from excessive stress and strain.

I have also gradually lost my confidence in the leadership of the Church, and I find it difficult to associate myself with many of the present leadership's decisions and ways doing things.

I therefore herewith tender my resignation, which will take effect from May Ist 1995, from my membership and all offices in the Holy Episcopal synod, from membership and offices in the Association Managing Committee, and from membership in other administrative bodies like the Standing Committee of the synod. I have never accepted my appointment as the secretary of the Holy synod, because of irregularities in that office not yet rectified. I resign also from being Metropolitan of the Diocese of Delhi.

If His Grace Job Mar Philoxenos is appointed as acting metropolitan of Delhi from may Ist 1995, I shall hand over to him all signatory and other powers and responsibilities as soon as such appointment is made and communicated to me.

I resign also as Chairman of St. Thomas Orthodox Vaidika Sanghom, since I have never been able to give as much time as I wanted to give to that Sanghom.

I would like to retain my responsibilities as Principal of the Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam, until a new Principal is appointed or until I am asked to hand over charge to someone else. I would also like to continue with the programmes of Sophia Society, Niti Santhi Kendra and Sarva Dharma Nilaya in Delhi.

I may be permitted to stay at the Delhi Orthodox Centre, until such time as I am able to move permanently to another residence of my own. If the Church wants to grant me a retirement allowance, I shall humbly accept the same.

For the time being I will continue to be President of the Parumala Mar Gregorios Memorial Charitable Trust in Thalacode and to be responsible for institutions like the Mar Gregorios ITI and the St. Mary's Boy's Home, related to that Trust.

I will also retain my present position in the Mar Gregorios Foundation in Kottayam, since that Foundation is dedicated to the promotion of my writings and ideas. I would like to serve as Chairman of the Mar Gregorios Charitable Fund in Delhi, since the money has been collected using my name. I need some means for helping people in need.

Please pray for me that I may continue to be faithful to the Lord who has called me to serve Him.

Your humble brother in the Lord

Paulos Mar Gregorios

36

DR. PAULOS MAR GREGORIOS

15th July 1996

My dear Sanjay,

Blessings to you. I have been thinking of you often, and miss you very much. It seems my responsibilities here in the Church (especially Reconciliation) will keep me pinned to Kottayam for a while yet. I have no idea when I can come to Delhi, though I know that the

Centre is completely orphaned with both Kochuthirumeni and Philip Achen away. Have you recently had a look at my car? Without a driver it is also orphaned. Please go and see what shape it is in.

Have you gotten to like your present job? I am not sure that it should be your life career. Have you tried to think about what Trans National Corporations are doing to our culture, to our independence, and to our economy? You should do some reading and reflection on this and share your thoughts with me.

I am sure you are making enough money for your needs now. I suggest that you also think about the poor and the needy. I suggest that you open a special Savings Bank account, exclusively for charity, and deposit in it - to begin with - a day's salary every month; do not use this money for any personal need; find out people who are really in need and help them. Later on you can increase your monthly contribution to a tenth of your salary. This will turn out to be the best thing you have done, for yourself, and for the Lord. I trust that you will take this advice seriously, and act right away. Do not worry about the money you will need for Manju's wedding, for mummy's health and so on. All that the Lord will take care of.

Write to me some time, sharing your thoughts and anxieties. Keep up your bible reading and daily prayers. God be with you always. Blessings to Mummy and Manju.

Affectionately

Paulos Mar Gregorios

(From: Prayatna (MGOCSM Delhi Diocese News letter), No. 4, Sept. 2003)

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