

**CORPORATISM, COMMONWEAL
AND THE JUST SOCIETY**
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Approaching The Educated Person in the Post Christian Era

PROLOGUE

In causal terms, the presence of oxygen is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for fire. Oxygen plus combustibles plus the striking of a match would illustrate a sufficient condition for fire. (William L. Reese)¹

The general subject of this conference is "*The Cultured (or Educated) Person in the Age of De-Christianisation.*"

The process of de-Christianisation in Western nations did not begin just recently; nor is it the product of any single era, movement or influence. In part, the disintegration of a unified Christian entity in Western Europe was the result of the degeneracy and corruption of the clergy, from the very highest levels to the lowest. This disintegration laid the groundwork for the mistrust of the Christian faith that slowly grew in the more educated classes of Western society. If one could place a single incident at the root of actual de-Christianisation, it would likely be the trial of Galileo. The condemnation of Galileo by fundamentalist forces in the Latin Church set off a chain reaction throughout Europe that powered the original process of de-Christianisation. Giordano Bruno had been burned at the stake a short while earlier for the "crime" of

1. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought* (Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1981, p.381).

Copernicanism:² he asserted that the earth moves around the sun, and that the heavens are not mobile, translucent solid rings pulled by spiritual entities. Galileo confirmed the ideas of both Copernicus and Bruno, and was threatened with death if he did not renounce the truth. Since his works, banned in Italy, were nevertheless published in Northern Europe, educated and cultured people throughout the West would see these incidents as a Christian war against truth.

There was no immediate tidal wave of de-Christianisation, but the glacier had begun to melt and the trickle of doubt would soon become a torrent. Christianity was so deeply engrained in the cultures of Europe that it would take another three centuries for something like a general de-Christianisation to become obvious.

With the trial of Galileo, a process of deconstruction began. At first this process was slow and related only to doubts about cosmological doctrines. It began to pick up speed, however, and accelerated like the ball which Galileo had rolled down an incline whose velocity accelerated at ft/sec^2 . With each century, this deconstruction increased like the squaring of the seconds in the acceleration in Galileo's experiment.

The Protestant Reformation, which had made the dissemination of Galileo's works possible, was the greatest process of deconstructionism in history. For centuries since the great schism, doubt had arisen about many of the teachings which developed in the Western Church. These doubts were greatly increased by the avarice and degenerate lifestyle of the clergy, especially the bishops and the highest ranking clergy of all. The deconstruction of the Latin Church had already begun by the thirteen hundreds. In that era, the various Gnostic

2. He was also a Pantheist, which was part of the charge against him, however, our sense of morality has evolved by now to such a degree that we no longer tolerate burning at the stake people who disagree with someone.

movements had gathered strength in Western Europe as they had earlier in the East. Much of the strength of the Gnostic movements lay in their protest against the degenerate living and the remoteness of the clergy in both the Byzantine and Latin Churches. After the sixteen hundreds, however, much deeper doubts arose. The accusations which Martin Luther had nailed to the door of All Saints Cathedral in Wittenberg on 31 October 1517 concerned only ecclesiastical matters. The doubts which were given birth by the burning of Giordano Bruno and the condemnation of Galileo on 21 June 1633 (both were deemed guilty of "Copernicanism") were of a more all-encompassing nature. When Luther expressed doubts about the theology, life and worthiness of the Latin Church, he was only giving voice to doubts that had been arising regularly for centuries. With Luther, the Western Church became engulfed in a flood of deconstructionism that we call the Reformation. It was inevitable that both streams of deconstruction should merge.

The deconstruction ushered in by the Galileo affair pertained not only to the Western Christian Church, but to Christianity itself. The Protestant Reformation led to the deconstruction of Christian Church history and tradition. It would ultimately undermine the very concepts of tradition and hierarchical structure. At first this affected only the Church. As this deconstruction gathered force, however, regard for all tradition and hierarchical structure in society would be undermined. This would have enormous consequences which are still being dealt with in the twenty-first century. The undermining of the traditional family paradigm would be one of the most notable casualties of Protestant deconstructionism.

That other form of deconstruction, for which we take the trial of Galileo as being the first milestone, formed a direct challenge to the whole of Christianity and to religion itself. It

was not that the emerging scientific revolution was in opposition to Christianity. Science did not create this deconstruction; rather it was the overbearing reaction of Christian leaders and intellectuals that created this process. It was Christian leaders themselves who created the greatest doubts in the minds of ordinary people about Christianity. The Reformation was the beginning of liberalism and liberal democracy. It ultimately made it possible for people to deny all forms of moral and spiritual authority. Not only was tradition abandoned in the understanding of faith and of the Scripture, but now each individual became his own personal authority in the interpretation of Scripture and of the Christian faith itself. The nearly hysterical reaction on the part of some Christian leaders to the writings of Charles Darwin only fed the flames of this deconstruction of Christianity. It is not that Darwin could not be read critically or that one could not disagree with his conclusions, but the panic with which the response had been carried out has had a profoundly negative affect. Worse still has been the clearly dishonest response on the part of many fundamentalist Christians, not least of which is the fraudulent "scientific creationism," which is enough to make many educated people leery of Christianity.

Thus we must in all honesty assert that the process of de-Christianisation was really inaugurated by Christian leaders and apologists. Fundamentalism, coupled with the undermining of regard for authority and tradition, could only result in the undermining of the institution itself. If fundamentalist Christians were confused and led into hysteria by the truth itself and if, as the Protestants taught, sacred tradition and hierarchical structure are evil, then there is essentially nothing left of the movement founded by Jesus Christ and His apostles. There is no foundation left in a Christianity which has no living sacred tradition or authority by which it interprets the Scripture and symbols of the faith. Without a

foundation there is left only a structure which will collapse when struck by a flood or an earthquake. The flood began slowly with the trial of Galileo and reached its peak with the debates about Darwin. The earthquake was unleashed earlier by the Protestant Reformation which itself destroyed the foundation and caused the structure to begin to crumble. Somehow, Protestantism has never managed to come to grips with the truth that, in undermining traditional structures and authority in the Church, they planted the seeds of the same deconstruction of society and family. Having accomplished this, their furtive quest for scapegoats has made it impossible for them to grasp the real problems and issues in the decline of family values and social structure.

This is why I have chosen to speak about the manner in which many of our contemporary clergy and Church leaders continue to undermine the possibility of faith and loyalty to the Church in our younger and more educated generation. We ourselves are a part of the movement of the deconstruction of the Christian Church and faith. I wish to suggest that this conference will be of little value if we do not discuss this aspect of the condition which we are calling “ the age of de-Christianisation.”

The term "de-Christianisation" now seems to us in the West to be a bit obsolete. For the past fifty years, we have been speaking of our "post-Christian era." Let me begin by illustrating what we mean by the "post-Christian era."

The focus of this term has been on (1) the pulling back of church institutions from direct attempts to control public life, (2) the aspiration of those who preach the Gospel to be free to do so without having to do it within state influenced frameworks which threaten the political independence of the church, (3) the increased recognition that the people of God are not the majority much less the moral majority, but may always be leaven in the bread of our common life.

Let us approach the specific subject of "de-Christianisation" from a point of view that is all too often ignored. I would like to discuss briefly the manner in which some Christian leaders support and advance the process of the de-Christianisation of society.

I teach and lecture regularly at a number of universities in both Canada and America; including two or three Protestant institutions. During any given year, I will have an opportunity to speak to thousands of students, and to actually have conversations with a few hundred of them. The doubts which are aroused in students at civil universities are not always different than the ones expressed by students in Christian colleges and universities. Both will mention Christian bigotry and hypocrisy, but the anti-science bias of fundamentalists will be mentioned more often in civil institutions. The factors that push students in both types of universities or colleges away from Christianity are nevertheless often the same, although Christian students are more likely to raise genuinely theological questions. There is a tragic variation in these factors among the Orthodox Christian young people that I speak with, but these particular factors are not limited to the educated youth. While we have many educated Protestants converting to Orthodox Christianity, we also have more and more people born in the faith failing to attend divine services or leaving the church altogether. Please allow me to offer some observations about these matters.

Educated young people are not less spiritual than previous generations. If anything, they are more spiritually inclined, and are seeking some spiritual foundation more than those who took religion for granted in earlier generations. Why, then, is Christianity less often the spiritual vehicle of choice and why are so many people who were reared in one or another of the Christian religions opting to find spiritual sustenance in other philosophical or religious movements? In

the brief time that I have, I would like to share some of the conclusions of my own rather extensive experience in confronting these very questions “on the front line,” to borrow a military expression. I would also like to aim my remarks primarily at those of our own tradition, the leaders of the Orthodox Christian Church. There are four particular areas that I wish to touch upon today. Some of them may not yet be so obvious in Romania, but they will be, and they are quite important to our subject:

(1). Foremost among the afflictions which drive people away from Christianity is the spiritual illness called “fundamentalism.” It includes both a hyper-literalist interpretation of Scripture and a dry, dead moralism, and above all the neo-pagan doctrine of atonement has crept into some of the teaching in the Orthodox world.

(2). Clergy arrogance and remoteness. This includes the failure of many priests and hierarchs to interact with the faithful in a meaningful and personal way. It also includes the failure of clergy to continue to educate themselves so that they can give meaningful and convincing answers to the questions raised by educated and cultured people.

Moreover, far too many priests, even those ill-equipped for it, declare themselves “spiritual fathers” in order to exercise power and manipulative control over their flocks, while not understanding the real meaning of parenthood (which is the true pattern for the spiritual father).

(3). Folk superstitions being taught as if they were doctrines of the faith, rather than the teaching of sound theology. This is often done by clergy who wish to manipulate and wrongfully control the faithful through fear. This problem affects Orthodox Christians more than any other Christian body and

occurs most frequently among monastics. It forms the most salient distraction from a Christ-centred spiritual life in the Orthodox Church. Often these superstitions completely distract one from an awareness of the fulness of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

(4). Among educated people raised in the so called “evangelical” denominations of Protestantism, the most common complaint I hear is called “spiritual abuse.” This is one of the more common reasons given by converts for leaving those denominations and becoming Orthodox Christians. This “spiritual abuse” includes the enormous unhealed guilt complexes that are heaped on people for even the most basic aspects of their humanity.

Evangelical fundamentalism, along with our own scholastics and fundamentalists, are more responsible for the de-Christianisation of society than any other force in the world. The Orthodox Church is certainly not immune to its own forms of spiritual abuse.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND MORALISM

The mass rally is so valuable because it is there that people abandon reason and accept oversimplified solutions (Adolf Hitler).

The abandonment of reason and the cruelty and evil of oversimplification is a hallmark of the new "religious right" movement in both Canada and America. While, on the surface, it appears to be a restoration of Christian influence, it is in reality a new Gnosticism fed and nourished by both the New Age Movement and a kind of deep structural fear.. Not only is it cruel, attempting to force dictatorial oversimplification on very complex matters of human existence and social life, it is also divisive. Each individual in this fundamentalist movement interprets one of 100 or more conflicting translations of Scripture as he or she "sees fit." It is an almost demonically prideful and arrogant movement. The common thread, apart from its New Age Gnosticism is a fear of, and war against, sound and solid modern science. The "religious right" has come into a spiritual bondage to a mythological understanding of the Old Testament and of the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse). Many of its adherents are openly in favour of provoking their version of the "battle of Armageddon," arrogantly supposing that they can thus hasten the return of Christ. Most of them adhere to the internally contradictory doctrines of "rapture" and at the same time, a purely Gnostic radical dualism in the nature of man. In the end, this movement with its cold moral fascism, is spawning a deep and lasting disillusionment with Christianity; perhaps with religion in general.

The twin malignancies, as I consider them to be, of Fundamentalism and moralism are the foremost causes of the

de-Christianisation of society in Canada and America and, I am certain, in Europe as well. They are harboured also in elements within the Orthodox Church, especially in some monasteries and "lay brotherhoods." For that reason, I want to address them first.

As I mentioned before, I speak at several universities and colleges in both Canada and America every year. Some of these institutions are Protestant and Roman Catholic seminaries or Evangelical Protestant universities and schools. You may be startled at what I have to say, but I have asked literally thousands of students over the years, "How many of you were born and raised in Christian homes, but have rejected or turned away from Christianity?" When I have counted the hands, it is often the majority of the students in the class or auditorium. I ask some of the students if they will share with us the reasons for their decisions. The overwhelming majority of the answers are the same, and they are touched upon even in Christian institutions where the students have not completely rejected Christianity. Let me summarize them:

a. Dead Moralism:

Morality consists far more in how well we care for one another than in what sort of behaviour we demand of others. (Deacon Lev Puhalo, 1973)

It turns out that the Greek iconographer and philosopher Photios Kontaglou was correct when he said that the Western Christian concept of God is a primary cause of atheism in the West. Perhaps more clearly, the novel Western doctrine of redemption called "atonement" is the real culprit. Aside from the fact that the doctrine leaves one with the impression that God has a personality that is at best an almost homicidal

divine fascism, it is contrary to the doctrine and teaching of the ancient Christian Church, and was invented only in early medieval times. The fact that I have heard such sentiments expressed literally thousands of times by students, and often by deeply believing Evangelical Protestant youth, as well as those who have already given up Christianity altogether, gives it profound meaning to our subject. Indeed, the second American President, John Adams, raised precisely this point in his correspondence with the third President of America, the Masonic deist Thomas Jefferson. I do not have time here to speak about this doctrine and how it opposes the Orthodox Christian doctrine of redemption, except to say that the Doctrine of Atonement really teaches us that Christ died to save us from God. What the doctrine has done to Western Christianity has been to reduce the Christian faith to a legal code of correct behaviour which is void of the element of internal struggle (*askesis; podvig*) for inner transformation and the transfiguration of the heart and mind of the believer. This legal code is expressed, not in genuine morality, but in a self-righteous and arrogant system of dead moralism when Christianity is reduced to an ideologically based programme of “correct behaviour.” It is rendered lifeless and meaningless. This vapid ideology has had to be shored up by turning churches into centres for shallow entertainment, self-centred hymns that reinforced ego and self-righteousness and abolishes the idea of struggling for the transformation of the inner person into a living pattern of true morality. It is clear beyond contradiction that this self-righteous moralism is used as a weapon to persecute and harass others who might not share the Pharisaic interpretation of external moralistic behaviour. It does not provide the spiritual means of attaining a truly moral life in Christ. Even many Orthodox clergy in North America now reject, either tacitly or openly, the concept of spiritual struggle for the transformation of the heart, especially

degrading the fasts of the Orthodox Church and discouraging people from observing them.

One of the forces in de-Christianising cultured and educated society is one of the major focuses of fundamentalist political activism. A primary thrust of this activism is a war against modern science, accentuated by a general disregard of the needs of the poorest elements in society. This war, which has been joined by some Orthodox clergy, undermines the Christian witness to our unfolding knowledge concerning authentic social problems. This hinders valid and constructive Christian input into the resolution of urgent social issues when arguments are offered from a moralistic, ideological system rather than from some reasonable Christian perspective. This has driven many people to question the entire Christian message. It has helped to undermine our objections to open abortion and our efforts to preserve marriage and encourage young couples to make a firm commitment in marriage rather than simply living together. In part, this is because dead moralism speaks in terms of absolute "black and white," and fails to relate its version of morality to the realities of life and to authentic spiritual struggle. It should be obvious to any thoughtful observer that there is no such thing as absolute "black and white" in the human condition; everything should be seen rather in shades of grey. Everyone is in transit; none of us has yet arrived at the destination to which Christ has called us. Moreover, morality cannot successfully be taught in overly simplistic concrete terms of "good and bad." We must give *meaning* to morality and teach it in terms of its actual ramifications in the life of society and of the individual. Constantly asserting morality in terms of "God will do something terrible to you if you do not do as we tell you to do" is not only ineffective, but it holds God up to derision. Moral law is not simply some arbitrary preference on the part of God; true morality is given to protect us from immediate

negative consequences in this present life, and to make civilised society possible. God has given us moral instruction as an act of love and concern for our well being, not simply as an expression of divine fetishes and pique, as it is so often taught.

I am certain that this is a “hard saying” for many, but I respectfully ask that you open your minds and think about it seriously and with prayer, because we have far too many scholastic moralists in the Orthodox Church who are also destroying the Christian faith in the minds of educated and cultured young people. In every conversation I have had with students who are Evangelical Protestants, both in their own institutions and in civil universities, a number of them will always remark that the Christian teaching they have received leaves them with nothing but a heavy burden of guilt with no way to work it out, and that attempts are made to cover over this darkness with shallow, light-minded hymnology, various entertainments and trance inducing emotionalism (which is an invitation to delusion) in place of authentic worship. This is, as I mentioned, a common story that we hear from the thousands of converts from Evangelicalism to Orthodoxy in both Canada and America. The Orthodox Church, however, has its own disconnects and tragedies.

Moralism is a kind of religiosity which seeks to label and condemn external behaviour. It demands an abandonment of what it has labelled "bad," without a deep analysis of its roots and causes and without offering a constructive programme of spiritual struggle. What it almost always accomplishes is merely to drive the behaviour into hidden fulfilment. It often hides real wickedness under a cloak of religiosity and consistently confirms our dictum that moral outrage is a form of involuntary confession. Just as patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel, so moralism is the last refuge of the corrupt and devious man.

This same emotionalistic, but dry and lifeless, scholastic

moralism is a cancer in many places in the Orthodox Church. We need to speak about this at some length on an occasion when there is time to do so. For the moment, let us allow St. John Chrysostom to speak to us with a brief word of instruction. *“It is of no avail to hold right doctrine but neglect life; nor does it contribute to our salvation to gain virtue but neglect true doctrine.”*³

B. Fundamentalism:

*Henceforth I spread confident wings to space:
I fear no barrier of crystal or of glass:
I cleave the heavens and soar to the infinite.*
Giordano Bruno, 1591

The moralism I have just described is a part of all the fundamentalisms in the world: Christian, Islamic, philosophical, political: all of them have some form of dry, dead moralism that they put forth as part of their *raison d'être*. The other kind of fundamentalism we need to address here is the bible-literalism aspect of it. We have touched upon it briefly above. When fundamentalist Christians insist on absolute literalism in biblical interpretation, they make atheism inevitable among a substantial portion of educated and cultured people. At the root of this travesty is the demand that people must believe things that have clearly been proved false in order to be “good Christians.” Fundamentalist Christians who insist that we must believe that dinosaurs and humans existed at the same time, or that the earth, even the universe, are no more than 10,000 years old, and that no form of evolution took place in God’s plan and direction of creation: these people and their ideology are the real force behind the

3. *Commentary on Genesis*, Homily 13:4.

growth of atheism in our society. Indeed, fundamentalist Christians are the foremost cause and moving force behind the de-Christianisation of Western Society, and they will be the primary cause for this same de-Christianisation in Orthodox Christian societies as well. Not only do they teach that Christ died to save us from God (rather than the Orthodox Christian doctrine of redemption from the power of death and bondage to Satan, and theosis), but they demand that we must choose between God and truth, but cannot have both.

Fundamentalism can thrive only in an atmosphere and culture of ignorance. In America today, we see the tragic spectacle of fundamentalists forming political movements in an attempt to force public schools to stop teaching modern science and physics because it contradicts their religious ideology and egoistic models of reality. Yet, I have met thousands of deeply believing and faithful highly educated young people whose faith has not been shaken at all by the discovery that dinosaurs were extinct millions of years before humans appeared, that the earth is four billion years old, that the time frame and chronology of the first few chapters in Genesis is not literally accurate, and that there is irrefutable evidence of some form of evolution taking place as God's eternal will and plan has unfolded in our universe. These young people have a vital, living faith in God and in Jesus Christ, while fundamentalists actually do not have faith but can only take refuge in their lifeless ideology, which is racing toward an empty *cul-de-sac*. It is a catastrophe when people think in terms of "absolutes," especially when they think they possess "absolute truth," or absolute reality. For one thing, if you think that way, you become incapable of growth, development or even of adventure. For another, you will be inclined to persecute other people, never realising that you yourself have become an emotional, intellectual and moral cripple.

Truth is never harmed by reality. Falsehood and error can never substantiate the truth of the Gospel. While our fundamentalists are busy creating conflicts where none actually exist and raising doubts in young people where none need be found, they appear unaware that faith is ultimately a matter of orientation rather than of ideological indoctrination. This is why so many believing, educated people are not the least bit troubled by the ideas of modern science, and their belief in God and their profound faith in Jesus Christ are sure and deeply founded. This is because they have a living faith in God, rather than a crippled dependency on an ideology that passes for faith.

Among the other tragedies of literalist fundamentalists is the fact that so much of the actual meaning of the Creation Narrative in the Bible is lost to them. They are so busy arguing for the literal, scientific accuracy of their own interpretation of the narrative that they completely neglect the rich and powerful spiritual meaning of it, a message and meaning which cultured and educated people can appreciate and accept, and come to have faith in.

Just as truth is never harmed by reality, so truth can never be served by a lie.

INTERACTION AND EDUCATION

It is of no avail to hold right doctrine but neglect life; nor does it contribute to our salvation to gain virtue but neglect true doctrine. (St. John Chrysostom)

This brings me to the subject of clergy interaction and Christian education, and particularly the education of seminarians who are going to be the priests, ministers and teachers in the Christian world.

A. Clergy Interaction:

When I speak of the failure of many priests and bishops to engage themselves with the people, the world and the great civil dialogue, I am not speaking specifically about "giving answers." Later in this paper I will address the matter of clergy continuing to educate themselves so they can give "meaningful and convincing answers." I am not speaking particularly about the priest as "a giver of answers," however, and I want to frame this part of our discussion in another way. "Answers" are like giving sound-bits or offering what we call "pop-ups" on the computer monitor, while "engaging" seekers in the meaningful questions in their lives is an act of spiritually and conversationally walking with them in this life and leading them with humility. It also means that, when necessary, they commend them to others who can lead them into the landscape of meaning and the sources of meaning that is the lifelong work of Christian formation and dialogue. What I wish we could expect from clergy is that they have a grip on the important questions of life. Only this could enable them to open up the conversation with their flocks, especially the youth, bringing together the particular currents of our

contemporary life (personally, socially and culturally). Only in this way can they frame these pressing questions and express how the landscape of the Church Tradition provides us with context, sign-posts, sensibilities and teaching so we can think clearly and deeply about our life and the life of the world. Only by fully understanding this connection between the Sacred Tradition and the real life of the world can one become illumined and speak with wisdom about the authentic life of people in the world — not with ideology, but with real knowledge and wisdom. Truth opens our eyes, makes our hearts elastic and makes it possible for us, the clergy, to speak healing words rather than engendering emotional and moral bondage.

The lack of meaningful interaction with the faithful outside of the liturgical services is a serious problem. It leaves people to seek outside the faith for answers and guidance in many pressing questions. Some will turn to superstitions, others to non-Christian sources, most to the New Age Movement. It is true that many of our priests have too narrow an education to be able to frame discussions and offer guidance in ways that are meaningful and useful to the more educated young people of our era, or to cultured older people. In fact, this does not matter much when the priest is open, warm and loving in his interactions with his flock, so long as he does not attempt to answer questions that he is not equipped to answer. The sincere care and love that the priest or bishop gives to his people is actually more powerful than any ability he may have to dialogue and answer broader questions.

The clergy are not called upon to be oracles, experts with all the answers. None of us, clergy or laity, are called to be ultimate experts. We are called to engage the world and the culture around us without flinching, seeking what is in the heart, not just what is said. We are called upon to learn to understand the gravity of the enquiries placed before us and

cultivate for ourselves a refined way of asking important questions. Then we are, to the extent that we are able, to open up the Gospel and Tradition as landscapes of meaning that help us learn how to engage the spiritual longing coming to greet us in the questions and enquiries we encounter. We must do this without fear and prejudice, taking delight in the opening up of the person with whom we are talking and his or her desire for knowledge.⁴

However, all the love and care that a person may have by nature cannot offset the damage that can be done by the clergyman who does not acknowledge his own limitations and understand the necessity of sometimes referring people to other professions.

4. These are issues that by my colleague David Goa and I have been advocating for the past two or three decades, and the ideas expressed come from our own discussions of these points.

B. Teaching and Education:

(1) An approach to teaching philosophy:

We need to carefully re-examine our seminary programmes. Let us ask ourselves if perhaps too much time is spent teaching Western philosophy, and too little time is spent on in depth study of the holy fathers. It is important to examine philosophy, but actually, most of the noted philosophers are utterly irrelevant to anything taking place in the world around us. I understand the value of teaching philosophy when it is taught as *an engagement in the great human dialogue*, and for the purpose of a development of critical thinking among the students. When one teaches these various philosophers *in place of* contemporary studies, however, or teaches them in the same context as the holy fathers, then we are actually crippling these future clergy in the kind of pastoral impact they need to have on contemporary educated and cultured people — particularly the younger generation. Too often, when patristic studies are tied together with philosophy, we end up corrupting the dynamic spiritual teaching of St. Gregory Palamas, St. Symeon the New Theologian and other of the great holy fathers, with neo-Platonism or Aristotelian rationalism.

The theories of epistemology, general learning, the way the brain and mind function, etc., which have been advanced by the philosophers have been disproved by medical and scientific research, and far more attention needs to be paid to the more accurate discoveries of modern science. In the end, we corrupt the grid through which theology should be understood. We teach students how non-Orthodox thought developed, but do not teach them the development of Orthodox Christian thought. We teach them Hellenistic, Latin and German rationalism, but do not teach them about the existential

encounter with mystery that constitutes the source of true Orthodox Christian theology.

Modern Western philosophy was developed by non-Orthodox theorists, many of them deist thinkers. Moreover, it was all done within the grid, and the vocabulary, of medieval scholasticism, which has the very opposite texture to Orthodox Christian theology. This has proved to be, as Canadian philosopher David J. Goa phrases it, "a dead-end but we must realise that it is an important dead-end that continues to reverberate in our public culture; and thus it must be understood." The question is how and in what context we can understand it. When it is taught as a continuing tradition of learning it simply continues the historic problems and errors which permeate the Scholastic system — that is, the radical break from the Orthodox Christian holy fathers and the living Tradition of the faith. It informs religion with merely human rationalistic traditions rather than the living Tradition of the faith which Apostle Paul enjoined us to hold fast to. The tragedy of Western philosophical theology is not that people read Plato and Aristotle but that they did not read the Church fathers in their own context. Certainly they have not read Plato and Aristotle in the way that the holy fathers read them, "turning them on their heads [giving radically different meanings to the words and concepts which they expressed] while using their vocabulary to make sense of the world and of the human nature."⁵ To read these great philosophers in any other context relating to theology, is to advance the cause of anti-Christian culture. I offer as a cautionary note that one of the responses to this misreading is that philosophical constraint was jettisoned in the development of a curious kind of scientism, which has been ushered in to replace it. And with all this, we still fail to read the Church fathers and fail once

5. The expression is from a lecture of David Goa.

more to turn the philosophers' quest for meaning around, reverse it, turn it upside down and thus recover the life of the world.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle did establish the groundwork for laying many superstitions to rest but their disciples ushered superstition in by the back door as we know so well from the works of Plotinus, Origen, Augustine of Hippo and others.⁶

I suggest that we need a short course included in our philosophy classes, in Western thought that would unveil this foundational issue and map its patterns through the Reformation thinkers, through Kant to the present day. But here is the issue. Philosophy must be studied but not as it is done in many seminaries where the first academic degree is in philosophy. We would do well to begin with the Gospels and the fathers and, having laid this proper foundation, we would then be able to engage the Western philosophical tradition of scholasticism for what it is: an enormous lost weekend shaping the mind of the modern world through the patterns of dualism and distorted dialectical thinking.

(2) Approaching life sciences:

What is perhaps more important to our present era is that in seminaries, all dry, scholastic philosophy classes should be limited and more emphasis placed on life sciences, basic physics and above all, on the holy and God-bearing fathers. We lose credibility with educated people when we are unable to engage in even the most basic and simple conversations that

6. The philosophers have contributed immensely to the great human dialogue, and produced a systematic method of thinking. In many cases, they helped shape the foundations of modern science. Within their own contexts they have profound insights. They are not, however, theologians and we cannot form our models of reality from philosophy, rather we can contemplate them in terms of the intellectual disciplines that philosophy had provided when our contemplations are informed by modern science.

include these subjects, or when we respond to them with some sort of fundamentalism or condescension. In February of this year, I was engaged with a group of university students during the agape at a Parish near Vancouver. Over the agape meal, one of them wanted to discuss the pros and cons of cosmic string theory. The discussion lasted for over an hour and was quite animated. Through it, these students increased in their sense of security in the Orthodox Christian faith. Naturally, no one expects every clergyman to be able to engage in that type of discussion, but one should expect the clergy not to respond to it with condescension, fear or retreat. It is far more effective to say honestly, "I am not versed in that subject, so I cannot discuss it adequately." Moreover, when young people in our area raise such issues, many of the Orthodox clergy, and a few Protestants ministers recommend that these people come to our monastery for such discussions because we can provide someone from among the clergy who can discuss it with them. Giving modern seminarians a basic vocabulary in physics and life sciences is a great help. It is also advisable that there be enough interaction among the clergy themselves so that they know which one to refer people to for more specialized questions. For example, we have a Romanian priest in Vancouver who is a neurobiologist. As you all are aware, however, sometimes petty jealousy and envy prevent this. Some priests in our era have a feeling of "proprietaryship" over their parishioners and, as the late Patriarch Alexei of Moscow once pointed out, this sometimes goes so far as to include cultish control and manipulation of the people by a priest or bishop. This tragedy, too, is part of the stream of forces that are helping to de-Christianize our society.

C. Education in General:

Teaching students "by rote" or mere memorization, simply

reading to them or lecturing *at them* is not education; it is sheer indoctrination, the creating of ideologies, not the forming of sound knowledge and vital faith. Education involves interaction and dialogue; the formation of the ability for critical thinking and reasoning. It sometimes involves a professor frankly and honestly admitting that he or she is not able to give a satisfactory or meaningful answer to a question and suggesting where a student might go to find that answer. A professor who seeks to present himself as an oracle rather than a human teacher is quite unconvincing and soon loses the trust of his or her students.

We truly need to give time in our seminaries and schools to subjects that will equip our seminarians to engage in meaningful dialogue with the contemporary world. We can do this without puffing them up so that they cannot also minister to less educated and simpler people. To the extent that we do spend time in the study of the philosophers, we need to make the subjects more vital than is usually the case. The study of philosophy should always be viewed as participation in the great human dialogue, the unfolding of the process of critical thinking and the mastering of organised and systematic thought. In this respect, we should be giving as much attention and credence to non-Western philosophers as to Western ones.

Let us also remember that modern science developed out of the philosophical process, and moved beyond the speculations of philosophy to testable and provable discoveries. The speculations of antique philosophers about the way the human brain works, the way we learn and about knowledge (epistemology) is no substitute for teaching the *truth* about these subjects. The reality about the way the brain operates, thinks and learns is to be gained from hard science, not from philosophers. The study of the philosophers, when not offset by a careful study of the holy fathers also leads to heretical thinking. For example, Plato and most of the Western

philosophers were dualists, whereas almost all of the holy fathers make a point of refuting dualism and condemning it as heresy. Emanuel Kant, although he was a dry, scholastic moralist, taught that true morality is attained without resort to God, and he negated altogether the need for a life in Christ.

I would like to add that when professors and teachers sit on a stage, behind a table and talk down to the students, they appear like petty bureaucrats or automated statues. One can hardly make a class an exciting learning experience with any real relevance while teaching in this medieval manner. It is especially crippling and empty when the professor does not engage in dialogue with the students and encourage their critical thinking. Before the Soviet revolution, Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky of Russia had warned leaders in the Russian educational system that if they did not teach the students active critical thinking, the students would all end up as socialists. They would not be able to think critically about the promises and egalitarian philosophy of socialism and many would (and did) accept it uncritically. He proved to be correct. We, in our time, if we do not teach critical thinking and have active dialogue with our students, will drive some students away from the Church and equip our seminarians to help de-Christianize our society when they become clergymen.

Philosophy and all the most brilliant philosophers put together have never given, and could never give any real meaning to life, to the world, to the universe. Nor have they any capacity to form a convincing goal for life or for the world itself. The *raison d'être*, the goal, the destiny of life of mankind and of the world lies outside this world. It can be approached through worship and prayer, but not by philosophy and worldly knowledge. But, and I wish to stress this strongly, this in no way negates the quest for knowledge and understanding in this world by means outside the Church and the faith. Our task is to participate in this quest for knowledge in the world

without condescension or condemnation, and add to it the final conclusions, opening the door to ultimate meaning and creating a world of meaning that ultimately fulfils the worldly knowledge gained through science and thought. What we have to add to the knowledge gained in the world is the knowledge of God and the pursuit of a life in Jesus Christ.

3

THE DIVINE SERVICES; HYPERCLERICALISM:

“The offering of thanksgiving again is common: for neither doth he give thanks alone, but also all the people. For having first heard their voices, when they assent that it is ‘meet and right’ to do so, then he begins the Eucharist.” (St John Chrysostom, Homily 18, on 2nd Corinthians, 4th century.)

“When all make their profession of the divine faith together, they anticipate the mystical Eucharist...In making that thanksgiving, the worthy confirm their gratitude for God's kindness, having no other way to reciprocate God's infinite blessings.” (St Maximos the Confessor, The Mystagogia, 34:31 7th century).

“The priest says: ‘Let us give thanks unto the Lord.’ The people affirm: ‘It is meet and right’ to send up hymns of thanksgiving.” (St Germanos of Constantinople, Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, 41. 8th century).

“The celebrant addresses to God this act of thanksgiving: ‘Let us give thanks unto the Lord.’ The faithful give their consent, saying, ‘It is meet and right’.” (Nicholas Kavalas, Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, Ch.26. 14th century).

“Ah, the power and prejudice of custom...” laments St. John Chrysostom in his homily condemning the practice of

not receiving Communion every Sunday. It is the power of custom rather than the Sacred Tradition of the Church that holds many of our Church leaders under its sway. Part of this stifling custom is based in a certain elitism and arrogance of our clergy. Whatever its basis, the power of custom prevents us from making adjustments and changes to practices in the Church, which are necessary in order to address and hold the faithful in the Church in the long term. We are not talking about some sort of "renovationism," or altering of Sacred Tradition and liturgical integrity. We are indicating a need to reassess various customs that may in themselves contradict the essence of liturgical worship. The continued exclusion of the faithful from a full participation in the divine services is a problem that all of us must come to grips with sooner or later. In America and Canada, this has gone so far that we find some priests and hierarchs even discouraging the faithful from keeping the canonical fasts of the Church. A more immediate problem is that the faithful are not permitted in many places to join the singing of the responses in the divine services when, in fact, we should be encouraging them to do so. In the Greek Church in Canada and America, the bishops have introduced, sometimes by force, organs and pianos into the churches. Often, the antiphons are replaced by organ recital music, but the faithful still do not participate in singing or chanting in what is left of the Liturgy. Apostle Peter refers to the faithful as a "royal priesthood," and the word "laity" is an abbreviation of the Greek "*laos to theou*" "the people of God." How is it that we clergy are so enamoured of ourselves, so arrogant, that we desire to exclude the "people of God" from participation in the services as much as possible, primarily in order to uphold our own exaggerated high opinion of ourselves?

This problem includes not only the failure to encourage the faithful to join the singing of the Divine Liturgy (and "Liturgy" is understood in the Orthodox Church as "the work

of the people”), but also our failure to encourage regular and frequent Communion of the Holy Mysteries. Stop and think about it without the prejudice of custom for a moment. The obnoxious and meaningless custom of opening and closing the royal doors and curtains during the Divine Liturgy is based on nothing else except the rank of the clergyman serving that day. We once read in the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate of a priest in Moscow who had been given, as an award, the right to serve the first part of the Liturgy with the curtain half open. Meanwhile, it is likely that very few of the faithful were approaching for Communion. The only argument I have ever heard for allowing priests of different rank to have the doors and curtains open for different portions of the Liturgy was that “it teaches the lower ranking clergy humility!”

As David Goa has stated, "The Liturgy is the highest form of the human story, and its most concrete expression."⁷ The purpose of the Divine Liturgy is to bring the faithful to Holy Communion, not to teach some clergy humility and others pride! Whatever the origins of the custom of some clergy opening and closing the doors and curtains at differing times, depending upon rank and privilege, it is distracting and forms just another way of closing the faithful out of full participation in the Liturgy. In spite of unclever sophisms, no one has ever proposed an explanation of this custom that has the slightest real meaning. Meanwhile, the faithful are seldom if ever taught the actual meaning of the actions and words which they see and hear during the Liturgy. How, then, do we expect educated and cultured younger generations to continue to attend the divine services? Protestantism at least offers participation in the services, as well as a great deal of shallow and empty entertainment; but this shallow entertainment is a big attraction for the “television generation.”

7. In an informal symposium.

When we cling so fervently to meaningless customs based in vanity and self-importance, it ultimately becomes more difficult for us to hold fast to those things which do have meaning and which are needful.

The greatest thing we can offer to the world and culture in which we live is our common prayer with that great cloud of witnesses with whom we pray in the Divine Liturgy. Our prayer together, our common worship "with one heart and one mind" is our primary spiritual offering and work for the life of the world. It is *our common work*, not the work of the clergy and the choir or chanter: it is the work of God's people together with the saints and angels.

4
EPILOGUE

Brethren, there would be nothing more unjust than our faith if it were only the sum of demonstrations which are wise and intellectual and abounding in words, for in that case simple people would remain without the acquisition of faith. (Saint Gregory of Nyssa).

There is a danger in reading the gifts of the secular simply as the loss of church power. While the secular is indeed a loss of religious power (and well it ought to be), the secular is a gift from the Christian tradition to both the life of the world and the life of the Church. To the Church, it provides the freedom from the corruption of worldly power so that it can regain authentic *spiritual authority*. To the world, it gives the freedom necessary to claim the Gospel and accept willingly its pathway to freedom and fullness of life. Moreover, to the Church, the secular makes it possible for it to re-establish its vocation as "leaven" so that the faithful may once more minister on all the margins present in the lives of people and in civil life. We have nothing to fear from an emerging secular society since "perfect love casts out fear."

What it does require of us is a deep engagement, through our faith formation, in the suffering of the world. It does require of us that we live out our vocation modeled by the Holy Theotokos to be birth-givers of Divine love in the world and to do so without constraint, particularly the constraints that arise when the Church shares power with the State or sees itself as a power broker within society. The Christian Church is never going to hold such a position again in society, but we should not feel threatened by this; rather we should feel challenged to rise to and meet the new situation head on. We

need to move into a post-Christian age with confidence, the confidence that comes from the recovery of the holy tradition and learning its sources and deepening the stance it gives us as the people of God instead of the arrogant stance shaped by the idea of being a people of the "dominant Christian culture" with all its requirements for self-interest and institutional interests, and the possibility of using the civil authority as a means to persecute others. Our gift is to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not to govern the world or dictate the behaviour of others. Our gift is to join that great cloud of witnesses that has gone before us and seek to nurture the world, society and culture, and offer the healing of Christ's words and presence to a world which we love and cherish, not one which we consider to be an enemy or adversary.

If we can accomplish this, then we may glimpse the energy of creation with an increased capacity to love God and minister in co-suffering love to His creation. We may then be able to heal the wounds of perception, the broken images of life which skew our regard for creation and for each other. Reality does not consist in abstract, disembodied ideas, but in that which we experience and the people whom we encounter. What we ultimately experience is that creation is good, even if man often does bad things with it and that we, if we pursue the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, may serve in some small way to help in the healing of our society and of the humanity around us, so dearly loved by God. Only then can we ever hope to turn back the tide of the de-Christianisation of culture and society.

Let a noted scientist have the last word:

Let everyone remember that the destiny of mankind is incomparable. Let him above all never forget that the divine image is in him, and in him alone, and that he is free to disregard it, to obliterate it, or to come closer to

*God by demonstrating his eagerness to work with Him
and for Him. (LeComte Du Noüy, 1947).*

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OUR CHANGING PARADIGMS: Models of reality as Sources of Conflict

Reality at all levels and in every dimension is a mystery. I will not suggest that the world which we experience with our own senses is *not* reality; nevertheless, what we perceive is the *surface* of reality, which is penetrated only with great spiritual effort over time. The more deeply we penetrate into this perceived reality, the greater the mystery becomes.

It is my proposal to demonstrate that almost all the apparent conflicts between science and faith arise from *models of reality* and not from reality itself. The resolution to such conflict may arise from a re-examination of the *models of reality* we hold which are based on obsolete information. The Church fathers should perhaps be given credit for possessing the integrity and intelligence to have restructured their understanding of the history, geography and the nature of the earth and the universe, if they had had access to the technology and information which is at hand in our century. The holy fathers were open to the learning and experience of the world around them, and utilised that learning themselves. There is every reason to surmise that they would utilise our

own contemporary exploration and learning to reshape many of their own *models of reality*. The reshaping of our *models of reality* does not contravene our basic dogmatic understandings about God as Creator and Redeemer. In fact, the discoveries of the past century only open us up to greater wonder at the beauty of the universe, along with its fragility: this can open to us also a greater appreciation of the presence of God and His role in the sustenance of our universe. We need not limit the role and plan of God by the boundaries of our own finite understanding and wisdom, but can open up our minds to the beauty, the vastness, the fragility and the dimensionality of the universe, as a way of increasing our faith and love-relationship with God.

When we become rigid and frozen in our *models of reality*, particularly when based in literalistic understandings of Scripture and the non-dogmatic statements of the holy fathers about science and history, then we deprive ourselves of reality itself, and close ourselves off from a more full discovery of God's presence, even though He is "everywhere present and fills all things."

Modern physics and cosmology have become "superstar" subjects. There is, however, an admirable and dignified modesty among physicists who acknowledge that they offer us only *models of reality*, rather than reality itself. When Nils Bohr said that "the purpose of science is not to know the essence of nature, but to discover what can be known about nature," he reminded us that science is a method of exploration, not the final arbiter of facts and understanding. Science is not an alternative to revelation.

This same dignified modesty is expressed in the Orthodox Christian concept of apophatic theology. Apophatic theology also acknowledges that doctrinal and poetic formulations are secondary worlds, models. They are more or less adequate in

helping us give words to and have concepts for our encounter with ultimate reality. Since no one can know or comprehend the essence of God, even the dogma of the Trinity must be understood as a secondary world, a conceptual framework of enormous importance and clarity that is the best we can do in the framing of language for the experience of the ineffable, but it is, nevertheless, a *model of reality*. When we assume that we have a concrete definition of the Divine, we step onto the path of those who built the Tower of Babel. We will examine later the problems created in Western Scholastic theology when philosophical theologians attempted to present such models as facts which are legally definable, adequate and comprehensible by reason.

In a similar context, physicist Werner Heisenberg says of quantum physics that we have no framework for correlating the mathematical symbols of it with the concepts of our human language, nor can we satisfactorily discuss atoms in normal language. The evidence of reality upon which scientific exploration builds *models of reality* can only be expressed symbolically by a mathematical formalism, which might be the closest one can come to expressing a metaphor for the great mysteries that are encountered but not resolved.

In order to better understand the essence of this discussion, let us first explain the meaning of *models of reality*. Perhaps the best way to do this is to look at history's most famous clash between models of realities.

In the year 1500, the general *model of reality* for our universe was neat, tidy, dogmatic — and completely wrong. It was generally acknowledged that the earth was the centre of a harmonious system of concentric circles. These circles, diaphanous crystal rings, were delineated by the heavenly bodies that rotated in perfect circles around the earth. The sun rotated around the earth, as did everything in the universe. There could be no essential change within the region of the

harmonious spheres. Earth did not move. Both the greatest of the philosophers and Holy Scripture agreed: Earth does not move, and the sun rises and sets as it moves in a perfect circular orbit around the earth.

This system was not thought to be a *model of reality*. It was held to be reality itself — reality so concrete that it could be a dogma of faith.

Then, however, an insignificant science-oriented monk somewhere in north central Europe had the outrageous temerity to offer a radical revision to this venerable model. Not only is the earth not stationary, he asserted, not only does it, like the other planets, rotate around the sun, but their orbits are not perfect circles. Father Nicholas Copernicus had the good fortune to live beyond the reach of the Inquisition, but his writings were received with sufficient outrage, and suppressed.

When, however, Galileo pointed his crude telescope toward the heavens, the old *model of reality* about the universe was doomed. Not only was Copernicus correct, but his understanding of the new model was only elementary. Indeed, he had only presented a more accurate model, but by no means a complete model.

The conflict that had arisen by the clash of these two *models of reality* was enormous. It had already cost the life of Giordano Bruno, and came close to claiming the life of Galileo.

Let us carry our example a step further. Copernicus and Galileo also gave us only *models of reality*. In fact, the sun is not stationary either, nor is it at the centre of the universe. It races through space at an enormous speed, in one of the tentacles of a massive spiral galaxy, which itself is hurtling outward from some unknown point to some unknown destination. This also is a *model of reality* which may be added to and augmented by yet more discoveries.

This historical example demonstrates both the meaning of "*models of reality*," and of my thesis that *models of reality*, and not reality *per se* are the sources of all the apparent conflicts between Christianity and modern science. Lest scientist judge too harshly, let us recall that the great physicist Boltzman was driven to suicide (in 1905) at least in part by the ridicule he endured from other scientists for espousing atomic theory. Atomic theory strongly contradicted the *model of reality* held by most physicists of his day.

How does the massive new information we have encounter *models of reality* shaped by an antique understanding of relevant sections of Holy Scripture? I would like to invite you to think together with me about how we might resolve the conflicts — sometimes bitter conflicts — between the new information which forms scientific *models of reality*, and *models of reality* drawn from a simplistic reading of the Bible.

AN OUTLINE OF THE MAIN POINTS OF OUR CONSIDERATION

1. Metaphor is integral to language, and the language of Scripture is rich in metaphor.
2. There are serious problems and loss of meaning when one literalises metaphor.
3. All tribes and societies throughout history have used stories to transmit their understanding of the meaning of life. It is a singular curiosity of our modern era that these stories are often presented, not as landscapes of meaning, but as concrete fact, history and science.
4. Challenging *models of reality* formed by the literalisation of metaphor and simple narratives is inevitable, and sincerely believing persons need to be clear about the language of meaning that constitute the purpose of a story, and *not become party to the reduction of that story* to history or

science. We should also be open to changes in our *models of reality*.

5. Testing *models of reality* with regards to cosmology, the creation narrative and man's history:

a. Science: the scientific method.

b. Religious: consistency of meaning, rather than concreteness of facts.

6. Theoria: a shared concept between physics and Orthodox Christian theology.

7. Science and Christianity: The challenge of living harmoniously with one another.

Here, we are speaking of those subjects where science and religion may overlap. There is a range of subjects in which there is no such overlapping. For example, science can say nothing about the Holy Trinity, the Resurrection of Christ and the Ascension.

2

Metaphor and Simple Stories

Simple stories told for simple people are intended to convey meaning. They are not concerned with scientific facts or chronological accuracy. They will often contain sophisticated psychology in narrative that appears naive on the surface. Although the stories appear simple, the meaning they convey may be complex and surprising in its depth.

Metaphor, which is very rich in older languages, conveys meaning by means of interlocking imagery. It is not "concrete" language. It has a fluidity that can convey textures of meaning which more concrete language cannot. Metaphor also contains an internal dissonance that warns one not to literalise it.

At the very least, literalising a simple narrative story or a metaphor creates a false *model of reality*. In relation to

scripture and theology, when we literalize a metaphor, we create an idolatry.

Let us look at the creation narrative in the book of Genesis, for example. The details and processes of the creation of the universe, our solar system and our earth are extremely complex. Indeed these matters are so complex and difficult to comprehend that the best scientific minds in history with the finest technology are only now unfolding the details, though with difficulty.

Why would the scripture attempt to explain all this vast complexity — so complex in many details that it exceeds human language and requires mathematical formulae to express it — to a wandering tribe of Hebrews who were not yet literate? Instead the narrative presents a simple story, but one filled with meaning and revelation. Moses had to come down from Sinai with the ten commandments; it would have been of no value for him to have returned with the Periodic Table of the Elements.

It is not surprising that ancient peoples formed a *model of reality* based on a more or less concrete and literal interpretation of the Genesis narrative; what is astonishing is that anyone in the 20th and 21st centuries would hold such a *model of reality* when it is so clearly false. The first tragedy in this is that it results in a loss of the actual meaning of the story. The second tragedy is that such a disproved *model of reality* sets up an unnecessary conflict between religion and science, which undermines the faith of many who desire to believe.

The creation narrative, from the beginning up to the time of the holy prophets Sarah and Abraham, condenses an enormous time and a vast prehistorical oral tradition into a simple narrative. This entire narrative is about *meaning*, not historical or scientific detail. We must remember that we derive our theology from *meaning*, not from supposed *facts*.

Facts do not constitute *truth* even when they are accurate, only *meaning* can provide a basis of truth, and both the meaning in scripture and the truth of that meaning are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. The same might be said of science. Brahe¹ was a careful, encyclopaedic recorder of observed astronomical facts, but still held an erroneous model of cosmology. His facts were of little value until his assistant, Kepler,² interpreted them after Brahe's death. Only when the "facts" were given meaning did they become of value for knowledge and understanding.

"Truth" is founded on meaning, while *models of reality* are based on supposed facts. More clearly, *models of reality* are derived from a presupposition of the accuracy of a given set of what appear, at least on the surface, to be facts — really, suppositions which have emerged in a given era of time.

For Orthodox Christians, spiritual and theological truth is derived from *meaning*, illumined by grace. Revelation, in the Christian sense, is also about meaning: a way of integrating meaning into the events in life. This too (understanding revelation) must be illumined by divine grace. If there is, therefore, any claim to immutable truth, it is a subject of spiritual experience rather than rationalistic reflection on a

1. Tycho Brahe (14 December 1546 – 24 October 1601), born Tyge Ottesen Brahe. Danish nobleman and astronomer, he is remembered for his accurate and comprehensive astronomical and planetary observations. In his *De nova stella*, published in 1573, he refuted the theory of the celestial spheres by showing the celestial heavens were not in an immutable or unchanging state of perfection as previously.

2. Johannes Kepler (December 27, 1571 – November 15, 1630). German mathematician, and assistant to Brahe. He was both an astronomer and astrologer. Kepler, a leading figure in the 17th century scientific revolution, interpreted and made sense of Brahe's observations..

given set of surmised facts.³ *Models of reality*, being based on surmise and supposition about what are presented as "facts" in a given era, are malleable and subject to revision and change when some or all of the bases of the information that informed these "facts" are disproved or displaced by later discoveries and newly emerging sets of information relating to the same subject.

This is where the crisis arises for fundamentalism and Scholastic based Western theology in general. Fundamentalist interpretations of Scripture consist in *models of reality* which are based on supposed facts, with little comprehension of meaning. It is these *models of reality* which many religious thinkers bring into conflict with the *models of reality* generated by physics and other fields of science and medicine.

3 AXIAL II

Karl Jaspers appears to have coined the expression, "axial period" to describe the great philosophical developments in the ancient world. He applied it to the long era between about 800 and 400 B.C.⁴ During that era, an enormous revolution in human thought and understanding took place. A radical shift in the paradigm that informed human thought and society occurred. At first, the transformation moved almost with the gradualness of the shift of the magnetic poles, but then it erupted into a great flowering of philosophy and

3. I have purposely avoided the use of the word "philosophy" and "philosophical," because the context might not be understood, and one might think either that we are degrading philosophy or elevating it to too high a level. Philosophy, to cite David Goa, is part of the "great human dialogue." We will discuss it later.

4. I do not recall his actual delineating dates, but it was during approximately that era,

systematic ethics. This era began at about the time Prophet Isaiah was illuminating the revelation of God in Israel. It was the epoch in which the Azeri prophet Zoroaster revolutionised religion in Persia, Confucianism developed the system of ethics in China and the Milesian Greeks began to speculate about the nature of being. During this period, too, the Buddha began to explore the problems of human suffering. The great thinkers of this era began to consider the actual meaning of myths and taboos, and to transpose them into systems of meaning. This process had, in fact, begun with the great lawgivers of history who attempted to systematise human experience into the structure of civil society, binding it together with legislation that took account of the purpose of the myths and taboos.

It was during this era that the quest for an understanding of the roots of good and evil advanced a general moral philosophy. It was evident that people could keep any set of laws to the letter and still do evil things to others. Law was not the solution; it remained only a mechanism for controlling and mitigating behaviour within a given civil society. Neither the moral concepts that were developing, nor the legal concepts were by any means universal. During this great axial period, theology began its long journey toward development. Philosophy was rivetted on *cause and effect*, and later spent great energy on the question of *how we learn and know*. The paradigm shift of this first axial period consisted in a movement away from unexplained myth, and into the realm of philosophy. The development of both philosophy and theology were part of the same stream. Within this stream, myth was converted to a systematic concept of ethics and social morality and the philosophers, both secular and religious, became the dominant practitioners who formed the grid of thought, beliefs, and structural changes in politics and governments and our concepts of humanity, the world and the

universe.

I will contend, with Robert Solomon, that we are in the midst of a second great axial period. It appears to me that a major paradigm shift is underway, and that it began already in the 1600s, but gathered its real force at the beginning of the 20th century. I want to suggest that this shift has been, in some small way, motivated by the fact that the question of *what we know* is overpowering the question of *how we learn and know*.⁵ The old preoccupation with a metaphysical dualism of mind/brain, and the abstraction of the intellect hardly seem tenable or significant in our present era. Reality at all levels and in every dimension, is a mystery. I do not suggest that the world of our sensual experience is *not* reality, but it is only the *surface* of reality. This surface can be penetrated only with great effort, either spiritual or scientific, over time. The more deeply we penetrate through the surface of this perceived reality, however, the greater the mystery becomes. This is reflected in quantum physics, and also in Orthodox Christian theological experience. Thus, both quantum mechanics and the world of Orthodox Christian spiritual experience are complementary. Orthodox theology can be informed by modern science, and modern science can be illumined by Orthodox Christian spiritual experience. This can be accomplished only when we clearly maintain the understanding that science is a method of exploration, not a dogmatic system, not pursued in the manner of a religion or "spirituality." Orthodox theology is not a system for interpreting the physical history and properties of the cosmos, but a means of the ascent and transformation of the human person, an avenue of the revelation of redemption, and a framework for life and experience.

What shapes our idea that we are in a second axial period,

5. I believe Lord Bertrand Russell suggests such a situation in one of his works.

is the major shift in the paradigms of philosophical and religious thought in the present era, beginning with the last decade of the 19th century.⁶ The shift has been such that scientists, and physicists in particular, have gradually replaced the philosophers as the architects of the grid through which we view humanity in relation to the world and the universe, and to each other. This shift has clearly touched all areas of human thought and reasoning. Just as the lofty theories of philosophers slowly "trickled down" to the most common levels of society, reshaping human thought, so the abstractions of scientists have been trickling down to every human level reshaping, over the past four or five centuries, every aspect of thought, including theological and religious concerns. In the 20th century, and especially in the present century, technology, which is something of a parasite on science, has had an even greater impact on the shaping of the human mind. Still, at the root of the making of the post-modern mind one has to see both quantum physics and evolutionary biology as seminal. This is the great paradigm shift that constitutes what I see as the Second Great Axial Era.

From an Orthodox Christian point of view, if we are to continue to effectively witness the faith of Jesus Christ, we must respond to this Axial shift. At a time when the Scholastic system in religious thought has been exposed for its emptiness as a spiritual and theological *cul-de-sac*, a deep spiritual void and hunger has been created in man by the age of technology, with both its benefits and its dehumanisation. The equally blind alley of "spirituality without religion" offers no answers;

6. I believe Dr. Solomon thinks of a second axial period as beginning during them 1700s. I would date the beginnings of the era in the 1600s, and suggest that a pivot point took form in the 1800s. The two major impetuses in that era were Newton and Darwin. However, in my view, we see the great paradigm shift taking place early in the 20th century, with the acceptance of atomic theory and the birth of quantum physics, coupled with the emergence of evolutionary biology.

it cannot separate itself from the spirit of the age and the bondage to ultimate hopelessness. Orthodox Christianity stands in a position to have a vital, existential encounter with the paradigm shift of the present Axial Era, and give form to the void and fulness in place of the emptiness that has been generated. It has the content and the spiritual power to carry man beyond mere spirituality and into a profound spiritual life, in the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is not in conflict with this new grid of understanding, but which rather has a complementarity with it. I will assert that Orthodoxy alone can sail easily upon the sea of our unfolding understanding of the universe, the origins of humankind and the mysteries of the quantum world. In order to do this effectively, however, we must wean our Orthodox teachers and leaders away from the bondage of Western Scholasticism into which so many have fallen, and bring them back to the great existential revelation of the faith so clearly enunciated by the holy fathers, and in particular by the great hesychastic theologians who synthesised our understanding of our true relationship with God and the universe.

If we cannot, as teachers of the faith and theologians, address in a meaningful and open way, the new paradigms of the Axial Era in which we live, then we will be frozen in obsolete and meaningless *models of reality*, which we must forever set into militant opposition to the *models of reality* of physics and all the sciences. If we fall prey to such arrogance, we will be unable to respond at all to the spiritual needs and aspirations of mankind, we will be unable to sustain the Gospel and we will be able to speak only to the most superstitious and religiously credulous elements in our various societies. The younger generation will have been betrayed by us as we betray the Gospel and the faith with a blind, reactionary religiosity rather than an openness to new understanding and a grasp of the infinitude of the Orthodox

Christian revelation.

Orthodox Christianity is not the arbiter of "facts," but the healer of humanity, the source of meaning, the path to authenticity of life and the doorway to eternity — to immortality.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE,
THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF ALBA IULIA

CORPORATISM, COMMONWEAL AND THE JUST SOCIETY (Alba Iulia, May 2006)

Is not this the manner of fast that I have commanded: to loose the bonds of repression, to lift the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free, and that you should break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you shall bring the poor that are cast out to your own home? Is it not that when you see the naked, you shall clothe him; and that you do not hide from your own weaknesses? Then shall your light break forth as the dawn, and your spirit will quickly spring forth: and your righteousness shall go before you and the glory of the Lord will be your recompense. (Isaiah 58:6-8)

Then the King will say to those on his right hand, Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungry, and you gave me food: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me.

Then shall the righteous answer, Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed You, or thirsty, and gave You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in or naked, and clothed You? Or when did we see You sick or in prison, and visit You?

And the King will answer them, I tell you in truth, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these

my brethren, you have done it unto me. (Matthew 25:34-40)

No society which is governed by ideologies can possibly be a "just society." The original meaning of "justice" (Lat. *iusitita*; Gk. *dikaionsine*) is "to balance, to set aright, rightness," etc. It indicates a recompense to those who have been wronged, even if they have been wronged by legal means. Justice did not have a juridical connotation until late middle Latin. It did not and does not mean simply "to punish." Nor does it mean to uphold a given ideology and attempt to force it on the community by means of the state power. In terms of a "just society," we must refer to the concepts of social justice, the commonweal, the common good. By "commonweal," we do not mean corporatism. As an example, in Socrates' Apology, he tells a story that illustrates the tension between corporatism and commonweal. Zeus, Socrates relates, decided to help mankind create a human society. He sent Hermes to distribute the necessary technical and managerial skill to certain people. The result was a society based on self-interest and expertise. Such a society was centrifugal and fragmented. As the philosopher John Ralston-Saul observes, Zeus had created a society based on the corporatist model. The economic and social structures were based on professional self-interest. People were defined and their value established by what they did. In more contemporary terms, this would be the corporatism of consumer capitalism, also based on self-interest and self-centredness: defining people by what and how much they consume.

Zeus sees the error and decides to remedy it by having Hermes distribute social reverence (*aidos*) and right-mindedness (*diki*) to every person. Social reverence signifies a sense of "community," a shared awareness, a shared knowledge of

self-constraint and belonging. Right-mindedness relates to a sense of social justice, integrity, freedom, and social order: a shared sense of responsibility. An example of this would be the Canada Health Care Act. Under our health care system, Canadians share the burden for one another, and this is perhaps our highest moral accomplishment as a nation. Those who are ill are not corporatised as "consumers of medical services," but rather are seen as equal human beings with equal access to the basic human right of adequate health care.

This is what we refer to as "commonweal." It defines people simply as "fellow human beings," as members of a community that we call "humanity."

Corporatism in a consumer capitalist economic system reorganizes society with the reduction of the individual to his or her status as a consumer. To consume is patriotic; to consume in excess is to raise the level of one's social status. This present economic world order presents us with intense moral and ethical contradictions, arguing that greed, self-gratification, and excess consumption are simply aspects of human nature. This argument, taken from the doctrines of Social Darwinism, is certainly questionable. As author Linda McQuaig observes in her essay, "Lost in the Global Shopping Mall":

Perhaps we are in danger of becoming such a culture, but it is important to remember that culture itself is a learned set of rules. The concept of the "common good" is one that has fallen out of favour in recent years. Over the past two decades, it has become increasingly common to dismiss the notion that we all share an interest in the broader community, that society is more than simply a collection of individuals all pursuing their own individual material self-interest. The rapaciousness of certain business leaders has been much in the spotlight recently. Even conservative

pundits appear shaken by the astounding greed and dishonesty at the heart of ... corporate culture. Still, some shrug it off as simple human nature, saying that we are inherently a competitive, acquisitive species, naturally inclined to push our own self-interest as far as we possibly can. But is this the whole picture? Is our society really nothing more than a loose collection of shoppers, graspers and self-absorbed swindlers? "

And as Paolo Virno has suggested:

At the base of contemporary cynicism is the fact that men and women learn by experiencing rules rather than 'facts'... Learning the rules, however, also means recognizing their unfoundedness and conventionality. We are no longer inserted into a single, predefined 'game' in which we participate with true conviction.

We now face several different 'games,' each devoid of all obviousness and seriousness. Only the site of an immediate self-affirmation – an affirmation that is much more brutal and arrogant, much more cynical, the more we employ, with no illusions but with perfect momentary adherence, those very rules whose conventionality and mutability we have perceived.

At this point we may also refer to the corporatization of morality and, to some extent, of Christianity. And here we have one of the primary reasons why Christianity itself has lost much, even most, of its influence in Western nations. It is no longer seen as having any true moral authority. The concept of commonweal — the common good — is foundational to an authentic sense of morality and to the idea of a just society. A clear and profound doctrine of commonweal is affirmed by Jesus Christ with his two great moral imperatives,

("love your neighbour as yourself" and "do unto others as you would have them do unto you"). Christ makes the love of neighbour (together with unconditional love of God) the very foundation and essence of the Law and the Prophets. The fulfillment of such a moral imperative certainly requires a direct encounter and interaction with culture and society. Unfortunately, this is an encounter that has been either abandoned, corporatized or reduced to outbursts of legalistic, juridical moralism by many Christian bodies. This is often coupled with the utopian fantasy of the mythological "godly nation." This leads to a deconstruction of Christianity by blending it with the unfounded socio-cultural constructs of this utopian fantasy. This in turn undermines the concept of a just society by reinterpreting the concept in the juridical terms of rules of externally correct behaviour. This approach corporatises human beings into categories which often prevent the effective encounter with human catastrophes and social injustices. When people are corporatised as "godly" or "ungodly," or "good" and "bad" in a moralistic way, punishment too often becomes the definition of "justice." In such a circumstance, there is little chance of a healing of social problems. Interaction with society under these concepts often consists primarily in scolding politicians and demanding that the law enforce on all citizens the sort of behaviour considered to be correct according to a given ideology, whether or not it ultimately has an overall positive effect on that society. We must avoid the inner contradictions of moralism and address the whole scope of true morality. Contrary an ideological approach, the Christian community must engage society and culture in a creative and interactive way. This would entail a deep sense of social justice, not juridical justice. The healing of social injustices can prevent as much crime, and sometimes more effectively, than juridical concepts of justice.

Justice, Morality and Moralism?

True morality consists far more in how well we care for one another than in what sort of behaviour we demand of others, and so it must certainly be tied to valid concepts of social justice.

Some years ago, when a large body of us had gathered in Ottawa to protest the civil sanctions against Iraq because about 500 children were dying each day because of these sanctions. I approached a group of Pro-life protesters in Ottawa. I asked them to join our protest because of the death of all these children. The members of the group were essentially very right-wing Christians, and they were quite rude and openly hostile to our protest. They refused, in an openly condemnatory manner, our invitation to express a sincere pro-life position by joining us in protesting the deaths of these thousands of children in Iraq. Yet, how can Christians consider it to be an authentic expression of morality or "pro-lifeism" to oppose the killing of unborn children while ignoring the killing of children who are already born? Is it truly moral to protect the lives of unborn children while ignoring or trivializing the fact that they will have to grow up in a world where, because of our own excess and ideologies, they will not have sufficient food and many of the necessary natural resources will have been squandered and climate change will have made their lives precarious and uncertain?

It is neither just nor moral to deny global warming for the sake of a religious ideology. It is genuinely evil to deny it in order to protect corporate profits. Is it actually moral to demand that governments enforce the sort of correct personal behaviour that our own ideologies demand while turning consumer capitalism into a religious doctrine that cannot be subjected to critique and criticism? One fatal flaw in the preaching of Christianity that has had negative effects in North America is the failure to distinguish between morality

and moralism. From an authentic Christian point of view, true morality has to do not only with salvation but with every aspect of our inter-human relations; it is not simply a system of correct behaviour.

True morality is not a system of law which, if obeyed, makes one a moral person. Nor does holiness consist in ultra-correct behaviour; rather it consists in perfect unselfish love. It is necessary to have laws relating to ethics and civil conduct for the sake of society, but such laws have little to do with the change of a person's heart and an inner transformation into the image of Christ's love. Morality is not a form of bondage but a path of liberation. True morality cannot be expressed in a society that does not base itself on concepts of social justice and the care for all the members of that society equally, no matter what their circumstances.

When we speak of "the law of God," we are not speaking of an ordinary, worldly notion of "law." God's law is not given to repress us but to protect us. If we are driving along a dangerous highway and the signs warn us to slow down because there is a dangerous curve in the road, that is a "law." The speed limit is set by law. If we disregard that law and crash over a cliff because we are driving too fast, we do not claim that the government punished us by making us crash. On the contrary, the government tried to save us from serious injury or death by making that law. This is precisely the meaning of the "law of God," of our system of morality. God has revealed to us a manner of life that can keep us from much pain and suffering and from many disasters. He has called upon us to realize that his law is a law of love, and that we should obey it out of love and trust in him, not from fear of punishment. Moreover, such true morality constrains us to imitate God's love in our dealings with the world. This is the essence of true morality, that it consists far more in how well we care for one another rather than in what sort of behaviour

we demand of others, and so it must certainly be tied to valid concepts of social justice.

When we speak of true morality, we are not referring to simple obedience to a system of law but a free accord with a system of spiritual healing. The authentic Christian spiritual life really does provide us with the means for moral healing, but even among our own people, we see so many who never experience such healing. This is because they encounter only moralism: "Obey this law or God will do something bad to you." There can be no such thing as a just society when that society is manipulated by fear and fundamentalist religious aggression. No just society or true morality can be manifested in the face of an arrogant and condescending ideology such as the "rapture" theory. Rapturism (which has no roots in ancient Christianity), corporatises humans into sharp categories of "us" and "them," of "they" who deserves to suffer and "we" who do not. It also innately disregards the human destruction of our biosphere, positing that those unworthy humans who are corporatised as the "left behind" deserve to suffer the ecological consequences, and so nothing should be done about them.

Moralism does not take into account what is necessary to actually heal a person and deliver them from the bondage of their inner suffering so they can lead a moral life; it thinks only about condemnation and punishment. But let us indicate how these ideas have a direct bearing on our subject. Our modern consumerism inclines a society not only to excess but also to self-centredness and indifference. One can opt to blame such attitudes on Satan, but when one does, let him remember that the power of Satan in our lives can be defeated only by means of unselfish love, by adopting a sincere sense of commonweal—to love your neighbour as yourself—in place of a desensitized self-interest. There is no such thing as Christian morality without an inner struggle toward unselfish

love, self-constraint, and a sincere concern for the welfare not only of those around us but also for future generations. Moralism condemns, usually with arrogant self-righteousness, while the spirit of a true concept of morality seeks one's own moral healing and the moral healing of those around us so they might be liberated from bondage to inner human suffering. It must be based in concepts of an effective social justice and the desire to contribute to a truly just society. This is the concept of morality that can keep us alive spiritually in our consumerist and corporatised secular culture without resort to recorporatising it with a religious ideology in place of a living, vital Faith.

The Corporatisation of Morality

The corporatisation of morality may be a product of radical individualism or simply of an egoistic ideology. Organizing and spending large sums of money to protest and lobby against certain forms of personal behaviour may be useful, but there is an inner contradiction that is inexcusable when the same organizers refuse to condemn corporate immorality or organize and finance lobbying about environmental issues that relate to the very survival of whole populations and the health, welfare, and survival of future generations. The destruction of the environment is every bit as immoral and kills just as many children as does abortion. Any sincere "pro-life" movement that does not wish to be riddled with internal contradictions that undermine its veracity, should certainly be in the forefront of the environmental movement. Any truly just concept of morality will encompass corporate and environmental immorality with the same fervour that it addresses what it considers to be personal immorality. It is urgent for us, as moral human beings, to recognize that future generations will pay a terrible price for

the excess and overindulgence of our era. We cannot separate spirituality from moral responsibility and here, consumerism poses yet another challenge. Since consumerism thrives on over-consumption, not only must products not be durable, as we mentioned before, but they should not be reasonably "upgradable" either. Computers, for example, are discarded and replaced regularly. Let us look at the injustice and moral tragedy of this problem.

In Canada alone, 140,000 tons of computer equipment, cell phones, and other types of electronic equipment, are discarded into waste disposal yards every year. That is the weight of about 28,000 fully-grown adult African elephants. This results in 4,750 tons of lead, 4.5 tons of cadmium, and 1.1 tonnes of mercury being leached into the water system and food chain every year. These toxic heavy metals are already creating havoc on people's health and causing a loss of drinking water reserves. Future generations will pay a devastating price for all this: for our addiction to "convenience," speed and the status symbols of a callous and indifferent society, the very status symbols that help to corporatise us.

Whether we care enough to do something about it or to resist this aspect of consumerism is both a social justice and a moral issue. It is also a barometer of our spirituality.

Yet we need not succumb to what Jürgen Habermas calls "personality systems without any aspiration to subjective truth nor secure processes for communal interpretation." This is why it is so important for us to consider the role that authentic morality can play in this unfolding drama of our present era. We cannot have such a role if we opt out of the political dialogue and refuse to engage culture and interact with the society around us in a creative and healing way which aims primarily for a truly just society. Without this, there can be no authentic system of morality.

REFLECTIONS ON PERSONALISM

(Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2009)

1

INTRODUCTION

When Dr Andrew Sopko made a comment about Personalism in his examination of my theology, I became curious about the philosophy of *Christian Personalism* and its French roots. Dr Sopko observed that, unlike some contemporary Orthodox theologians, I had not fallen into "Personalism." From my examination of Personalism, I conclude that there can be no Orthodox Personalism. Whatever our view of it, it is evident that there is no patristic support for Personalism, or for any kind of *synthesis* of Christianity with Phenomenology¹ or neo-Kantian liberalism.

Many historians had presumed that Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Christianity was shaped by an osmosis from Plato and Aristotle. This surmise has been based upon the use of vocabulary which developed in the process of Greek (Hellenic and Hellenistic) philosophy. Scant attention was paid to the fact that the Church fathers generally turned Plato "upside down," while utilising much of his vocabulary.² Western historians and theologians, however, tend to read the Church fathers in the same context that they would read Plato. It is extremely difficult for the Western mind to divorce itself from Scholasticism, and this adds to the problem because Western scholars tend to read the holy fathers through the lens and with the concepts of Scholasticism. They are also generally unaware of the great foundational shift that is effected by the Liturgics of the Orthodox Church as well as by the actions of divine grace. Nor was there any harmonising of Christianity with Plotinus and the Stoics by the Church fathers. It is true that some early Christian writers and philosophers who were

not fathers of the Church, such as Clement of Alexandria, Augustine and Origen did not observe this separation, but the fathers of the Church did.

They did utilise that cultural vocabulary and appeal to Hellenic thought as an instrument of discernment, communication and elaboration of the Faith, but they did so with caution. In other words, unlike post-patristic theology, philosophy and ethics, there was no amalgamation of *first principles* between the Church fathers and the Greeks. There is no continuity from antiquity to modernity on the question of the relationship between Orthodoxy and the Greeks—the dogmatism of Western scholarship notwithstanding. Such a continuity would be more true of Western theological development. As Cosmologist Menas Kafatos observes, *The dualistic conception of reality as consisting of abstract, disembodied ideas existing in a domain separate from and superior to that of sensible objects and movements became the most characteristic feature of Western philosophical and religious thought.*³ Orthodox Christian mystical thought does not place reality in some *noetos kosmos*, some abstract realm of ideal forms. They were rather concerned with the dynamic working out of the human nature,⁴ and the synergism between man and God. They also strove to demonstrate that man can have a relationship with God Who is both personal and yet unknowable.⁵

Personalism arose well over a century ago within the Western heritage but I want to direct the reader's attention to Personalism and its modernity — "the paradigm for the second modernity," as James Lawson refers to it.⁶ Although Personalism has many both Christian and non-Christian proponents, such as Charles Peguy, Pope John Paul II,⁷ Martin Luther King Jr., Paul Maurin, Edith Stein, Dorothy Day, Martin Buber, Max Scheler, and others, there are three Personalists who will occupy most of our discussion: the

French Roman Catholic Emmanuel Mounier (1905–1950), whose journal, *L'Esprit*, launched the principles of Personalism; the American Methodist Professor Borden Parker Bownes (1847–1910) of Boston University and, finally, the Russian Bohemist émigré Nicholas Berdyaev (1874–1948), "the prince of the Catholic Workers Movement." Like many others, Berdyaev viewed the "communitarian revolution" of the 1930s as a social demonstration of Personalism.

This Movement (and several similar ones) was ignited by the Great Depression. It was fuelled by several papal encyclicals: Pope Leo XIII issued *Rerum Novarum* (15 May 1891) with its concern for the urban poor; and later, Pope Pius XI *Quadragesimo Anno* (15 May 1931) which called for the reconstruction of the social order through the recognition of the sanctity of human life and the dignity of each individual. They were aware of the significant number of members that the Catholic Church had been losing since the Industrial Revolution. At the same time, these papal declarations prepared the way for a religious answer to Marxism. Unfortunately, this religious response to materialism and collectivism did not imply a return to the Christian Tradition but rather encouraged Personalists to hail their experiment as a grand synthesis or, as some had described it, the "clarification of thought" and a "new humanism."

2

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MODERN PERSONALISM

The use of the term "Personalism" first appeared in Friedrich Schleiermacher's "*Personalismus*" in his *Discourses* (1799) and in the 1860s Walt Whitman and Bronson Alcott used it. Personalism did not, however, assume the character of a school until the appearance of the work of Boston University's Borden Bownes. He had been taught in Germany

by the philosopher Herman Lotze (1817-1881). Against Georg Fredrich Hegel, whose Absolute or Universal Spirit threatened to swallow the cosmos, Lotze defended the unity and indissolubility of the individual *self*. He had also been the teacher of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), whose Phenomenology inspired his pupils Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), the prodigal Max Scheler (1874-1928), and Edith Stein (1891-1943). Scheler attempted to find an objective basis for ethics which avoided "the empty and barren formalism" of Kant's "practical judgment."⁸ One of Scheler's pupils was Roman Ingarden who was the teacher of Karol Wojtyla.⁹ There was, among these philosophers, a failure of modesty about the human person. They did not anchor the concept of "person" in finitude. Orthodoxy does anchor personhood in a finitude which is illumined by the light of the hope of coming into union with the eternal.

Personalism also inspired post-World War I American radicalism, none more important than the work of the marvellous Dorothy Day (1897-1980), a founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. She was taught Personalism by the French Catholic émigré, Pierre Maurin (1887-1949), co-founder and collaborator in the social action of the Catholic Worker Movement. Curiously, Day referred to the Russian Sophianist Vladimir Soloviev as her favourite philosopher, without meaning any slight to the inestimable contribution of Berdyaev to the Personalist doctrine. However important all these figures were to Personalism, it was Emmanuel Mounier (a "new Catholic of the Left") who was its guiding spirit. The organ of the Movement was the *L'Esprit* which he established in 1932. It has been described as anti-American, anti-Socialist, and pro-fascist.

Mounier's Personalism is eloquently expressed in his numerous books, most of which have been translated into English and other languages: *Personalist Revolution and the*

Communitarian (1935), *A Personalist Manifesto* (first published in *L'Esprit*, October, 1936) *What is Personalism?* (1947), *Personalism* (1940), *Be Not Afraid: Studies in Personalist Sociology* (1951), etc. They are dedicated to the affirmation of the absolute value of the human person. When Mounier declares the person to be something "absolute," we must not think of the word in Hegelian terms. Not even the Rights of Man elevate him to that status.

Inasmuch as Mounier's Personalism is both religious and Roman Catholic, he believed that man is neither "clump of clay" or "pure spirit." The human person is, contrary to Descartes, a single unified substance, a dynamic whole which is the synthesis of body and soul.¹⁰ He is a self-conscious embodied soul. To be sure, Mounier agrees that each man is *in the image of God*, but his philosophical interpretation of the concept left him far short of Christian anthropology. Although he agreed with Thomas Aquinas that "person signifies the most perfect of all"—a position Mounier shared with Jacques Maritain—the former insisted that, thanks to Christ, the person is neither Greek nor Christian, but self-born. He is self-created (*autogenesis*). Personalism generally agrees with those Existentialist philosophers who hold that man has no essence, and must form it by his decisions and actions. While it is difficult to see how a creature with no essence can create anything, especially his own essence, Mounier posits that man's autonomy makes him "the being who defines himself." He is *sine matre creatum*. This will not equal the patristic concept of *hypostasis*, but rather asserts an existence without an essence. Man would, in this system, give birth to his own essence and he would constitute his own essence.¹¹ A particularly disturbing aspect of this is the disunity of mankind that such a position indicates. Orthodox Christianity understands that all mankind shares in the same essence, the human nature. The human nature is what is

common to all and subject to the laws of nature. It is this common human nature that should cause us to have a respect for all human beings, and which should, for example, tell us that racism is a form of apostasy. Nevertheless, we are not without an individual personhood, a "particular" essence, which we can shape and expand (or contract). The holy fathers resolved this apparent paradox by expressing our individual personhood, our "particular essence," with the ontological category of *hypostasis*. The category of *hypostasis* includes one's personal differentiation and particularity. It relates to what we consciously and intentionally do with our essence and energy.¹² *Hypostasis* signifies, therefore, not only our personal differentiation but our freedom within, and ability to rise above, our common human nature or essence. This concept is necessary in order to understand how we have individuality but are at the same time all comprised in the one, single human nature, regardless of race, nationality, religion, gender or any of the other categories that our finite humanity can think of in order to create divisions and hatred among humanity. We all partake in this common essence of man, nevertheless, we do have a unique hypostasis, and this provides our personal creativity and our freedom to shape our own lives and fulfil our own personal potential, to develop our own character. We would understand this *hypostasis* as a gift of grace, something which is added to our being by grace. Orthodox Christian anthropology holds that all share in common the human nature, even though this nature can be known only in individuals, not in abstractions. He is part, and yet he is whole. The individual personhood of each lies in his *hypostasis*, not in a "being without an essence," an essential *tabula rasa*. This concept of nature and *hypostasis* is discussed more fully in my book *Freedom To Believe: Personhood and Freedom in Orthodox Christian Ontology*.¹³ I would like to suggest another possible problem with the Personalist notion

about essence. If we must create our own essence, how do we have any idea of what is natural to man and what is unnatural — even "natural human rights?" If there is not a common, natural essence of all mankind, how could there possibly be common "natural human rights?" How do we determine what aspects or characteristics one is born with and which are self-created, which occur within the common nature of man and which are matters of free choice and "self created?" Science has resolved some of the questions and may very well resolve others. When we find them resolved as things which occur with regularity within the human nature, they demonstrate a common human essence which is not self-created.

In the absence of these proper ontological categories, recognised in the Orthodox Christian Church, Personalism developed in the quest for the resolution of irreconcilable paradoxes in the understanding of the individual as part and whole of humanity. That is, in our Orthodox perspective, the human person shares the common human nature, but that nature can be known only in individuals. He shares in the common human nature, but he possesses a "particular essence," which is evident from his ability to develop himself and seek and develop his relationship with God. So we (from an Orthodox point of view) assert that he is both part and whole of humanity.

Mounier would not have us confuse Personalism with Individualism. The latter is a conception of the self as an object, and this is not the purpose of Personalism. For Mounier the individual is an object without interiority; he is a mass of emotions agitated by the senses. Individualism, therefore, blocks the road to social participation; in fact, it is an enemy of the community, for if the individual is the supreme value, his interests are subordinated to the interests of the many. In its extreme form, individualism leads to solipsism or the belief that only the individual is real.¹⁴ It is a kind of

self-deification. Mounier wants no obstacle to his autonomy and demands the right to act freely, but not in the form of a radical individualism. For him, the individual defines himself as independent of any social bonds. He opposes rights to duties. But Mounier is not being self-contradictory. The irony of individualism is that, as Plato said, it will morph into a collectivism, where the individual will also be on his own, perhaps only an object in the communal landscape.

For Mounier, the only answer to individualism and collectivism is Personalism. Mounier offers its creed in the *Personalist Manifesto*. Although he admits that Personalism presupposes certain principles or may be viewed as the necessary effects of ultimate causes, Mounier denies that it is a philosophy expressed in ideas. Furthermore, there is a Personalist understanding of the universe that is seen from the perspective of a "free and creative person." In terms of these principles and effects, he describes a person as "a spiritual being constituted as such by subsistence and independence." The Personality adheres to a hierarchy of values "freely adapted, assimilated, practised by a responsible faithful and self-committed *self*." Each human being unifies all its activities freely for the purpose of developing his own personhood. His decisions and creative acts—each with his own vocation—shows that he is a moral being. The reconnecting or reconciling of being with moral life is an issue for Orthodox Christian theology also. While the dogmas of the faith underpin our moral struggle,¹⁵ it is preeminently in the Liturgy that we find the reconnection of being with moral life.

Mounier did not place his trust in political parties. He also rejected the notion that Personalism requires violence in order to transfigure contemporary institutions. It may be "revolutionary," but only because it seeks a new social order — that is, for the order first enunciated by Christ in his Sermon on the Mount. Such a point of view seems inconsis-

tent with his advocacy of the liberal democracy and the universality of human rights. A liberal democracy ultimately and ironically guarantees anarchy,¹⁶ and the demand for a universality of human rights without any contingent expression of a universality of human responsibilities ultimately undermines democracy. The demand for a universality of human rights without a clearly defined universality of human responsibilities is based on unsustainable presuppositions of man as "a human being with natural rights." Human rights are defined by human societies, they are not "naturally occurring." The "certain inalienable rights" prescribed by the founders of the American state are defined by them, not mentioned by the Creator. Man was created with the freedom to form his societies and to define the rights and obligations of those societies. The boundaries of those rights are not agreed upon by all members of any society, even the most democratic, and in some cases they are sharply debated by substantial numbers of those members. Personalism may advocate a system of rights that it considers to be "natural human rights," but if some group which the Personalists themselves disapprove of demanded equal "natural human rights," then one would find many of them advocating that those "certain inalienable rights" exclude that particular group (Thomas Jefferson did not free his slaves, after all, and it was more than a hundred years after the American Civil War before black people could begin to more fully participate in those "natural rights" of mankind which the founders of the American Republic ostensibly guaranteed to all). It would be interesting to discover who the Personalist philosophers would deny those "natural rights" to.

In advocating the Personalist cause as something that calls upon humanity to fulfil the improbable task of living "in accordance with the justice and charity of Jesus," Mounier is either incognizant of or indifferent to the power of sin and

evil. His optimism is laudable but naive, for these are forces which must be encountered and dealt with in any process of striving to fulfil such a lofty calling. Utopian movements typically collapse because the fallen nature of mankind is not taken as a reality. Here we must note that when we speak of "fallen nature," we are not speaking in an Augustinian concept. The nature of man is not "totally depraved," "completely corrupt," or "evil." Mankind is essentially oriented toward the good and possessed of a moral conscience. Nevertheless, the "fall of mankind" indicates the penetration of the human nature with a spirit of egoism, self-love and self-centredness. This creates an internal contradiction within us, and this is a reality which must be taken into consideration. One will find this contradiction at the root of the failure of utopian movements, and the struggle against it at the root of the success of some communal movements. Those communal movement, such as the Amish, the Hutterites and Russian Orthodox "Old Believers," have been both cultural and religious. They have had a profound understanding of the struggle against egoism and self-centredness.

It must be noted also that Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin is considered to be heretical by the Orthodox Church. The use of the term "fallen human nature" is not a moral judgment, but a description of the finitude and woundedness of man's essence.

Let us make clear what we mean by "sin and evil." Orthodox Christianity does not understand sin as "breaking a law." Rather sin is the habitual misuse of our energies, a misdirection of our freedom. This misuse and misdirection is not corrected by a mere act of will, even with the best of intentions. Evil does not have any ontological "being." There is no *amorphous evil*. Christ did not say to pray "deliver us from evil," but "deliver us from the evil-one," that is, the one who wilfully and intentionally misuses his energies in a

destructive and malicious manner, the one who has intentionally separated himself from God and become an enemy of all who worship God. Evil is not a "thing" in itself, but a corruption and deeply ingrained addiction to the misuse of one's energies.¹⁷ It takes moral struggle aided by grace to strive for regeneration. Living fully in accord with the justice and charity of Jesus is no simple task. Personalists are speaking of social justice, and the Hebrew prophets spoke about it also. The concept of the justice of Christ is a type of social justice, but it includes much more, a kind of mercy that exceeds social justice and which, were we to truly attempt to live in accordance with the justice and charity of Jesus, we must also fulfil. The justice of God is, in the understanding of the holy fathers, diametrically opposite of all human forensic or juridical notions of justice. It is not about punishment, but about rebalancing the kind of moral "rightness" that embraces the needs and failures of others in a healing and supportive manner, without destroying the essential freedom of any. This is perhaps best expressed by the Greek theologian Dr. Alexandre Kalomiros who reminds us that:

This is a theme which "needs to be preached with great insistence [for] not only the West but we Orthodox have departed [from it] in great numbers, causing men to fall to atheism because they are revolted against a falsified angry God full of vengeance toward His creatures... We must urgently understand that God is responsible only for everlasting life and bliss, and that hell (gehenna) is nothing else but the rejection of this everlasting life and bliss, the everlasting revolt against the everlasting love of God. We must urgently remember and preach that it is not a creation of God but a creation [i.e., product] of our revolted liberty, that God did not create any punishing instrument that is called hell, that God never takes

vengeance on His revolted creatures, that His justice has nothing to do with the legalistic `justice' of human society which punishes the wicked in order to defend itself...That our everlasting spiritual death is not inflicted on us by God, but is a spiritual suicide, everlasting because our decision to be friends or enemies of God is a completely free and everlasting decision of the free spiritual beings created by God, a decision which is respected by God eternally and absolutely."¹⁸

As Abba Isaak the Ninevite says:

As a grain of sand cannot counterbalance a great quantity of gold, so God's use of just judgment cannot counterbalance the likeness of His mercifulness. As a handful of sand thrown into a great sea, so are the sins of all flesh with respect to the likeness of the providence and mercy of God. And just as a strongly flowing spring is not obstructed by a handful of dust, so the mercy of the Creator is not stemmed by the vices of His creatures."¹⁹

And again he tells us:

Now by this as in an image the Spirit depicts the design that God has had everlastingly. But the man who chooses to consider God an avenger, presuming that he bears witness to His justice, the same accuses Him of being bereft of goodness. Far be it that in that Fountain of Love and Ocean brimming with goodness, vengeance could ever be found!...For He wills that we should rejoice not as it were in what is His, but as it were in the recompense of our own deeds. For although all things are His, yet He is not pleased that we should consider them His, but that we should delight in what is as it were ours."²⁰

St Dionysios the Areopagite also says:

The divine justice in this respect is really true justice because it distributes to all, the things proper to themselves, according to the fitness of each existing thing, and preserves the nature of each in its own order and fitness...the nature of each in its own order and capacity.²¹

Mounier believes that Personalism may adopt Francis of Assisi as the Personalist icon, while, at the same time, ignoring the Faith that motivated Francis. This gallant defender of the papacy would never have allowed himself to be set in opposition to "the clerical order" of his Church. I doubt that Francis would have endorsed Lev Tolstoy's subjective and anti-Church understanding of the biblical words, "the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21—"ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν"). Tolstoy understood the words, "the Kingdom of God is within you" in a secular, utopian sense which Francis would never have conceived. Mounier was more attuned to Tolstoy's concept than to that of the peaceful monk of Assisi.

Necessarily, then, leftist Personalism demands a *secular* "revolution." Advocating, as it does, "the daily works of mercy" (hence the building homes for the homeless, farming communes, discourses of love, etc.) as noble as it is, does not permit us to completely identify these acts of mercy with those prescribed in Christian revelation, for they are based in concepts of secularism. Christian revelation advocates the same thing but does not divorce them from the process of the regeneration of man, with the dynamic of holiness and the recovery of the fulness of personhood. Holiness is not an abstraction or a concept of "perfect behaviour," but a manifestation of completely unselfish love. The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel makes it clear that entry into the

joy of Christ, the Heavenly Kingdom, depends on the fulfilment of such care for others, motivated by unselfish love. The fulfilment of the moral imperative expressed in the chapter of Matthew's Gospel must be seen, not simply as acts of charity but as an entering into communion with the Kingdom of God. It is beyond charity and reaches into the eternal.²² Christian revelation nowhere suggests that we can create a secular "people's paradise" on earth and lose sight of the Heavenly Kingdom and the age to come. When they collapse into ideology, neither utopian philosophies nor Christianity can sustain these high ideals in practice. But let us not denigrate the works of mercy just because they are fulfilled in the context of secularism and not mindful of the process of regeneration. They are still inspired by Christ. Perhaps one could rather use the injunction of Christ, "these you ought to have done, while not leaving the other undone" (Mt. 23:23). One cannot claim that being Christian guarantees the fulfilment of either one. Nor can simple faith guarantee entry into the Kingdom. Those who live their lives in Communion are the ones who will find themselves "on the right hand" of the Glory when the Kingdom is fully manifested.

According to Mounier, Personalism is quintessentially "a philosophy of hope." Yet, it is genuine futility to believe that the majority of people will dedicate themselves to the Personalist responsibility of changing human institutions without there being first a regeneration of human nature. We have heard before the motto "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." Mounier has merely assumed that man has an unimpeded free will and that, with an appeal to his better side, he is able and willing to realise the Personalist agenda. Plato had a similar idea, but it does not work. It is a "hope" no better than the vision of Socialism. To use the words of Christopher Lasch, Personalism is nothing but a "culture of narcissism." Although Lasch might not

develop his idea this way, we might say that this narcissism is fed by the tendency of utopianists to neglect the need for the struggle of regeneration, for a life centred on repentance and forgiveness. We are not a "system" or a machine with a reset button. We cannot change fundamental aspects of our nature with a mere act of will, even of good will. Ideas, ideals and philosophies alone cannot accomplish this.

There is nothing unique about Mounier's Personalism. It claims to disdain Socialism and Marxism because they deprive man of his dignity and value. Yet in its own definition, Personalism reduces man to a "being with rights." Claiming to be Christian, it equates, for all practical purposes, the biblical idea of *imago Dei* with this conception, as if the image of God in man was the sum total of "natural rights." Mounier's "Person" is a philosophical notion that is found nowhere in the Christian Tradition. It was futile of him to associate his secular philosophy with the "psychology" of Francis of Assisi and Augustine of Hippo. He may proclaim joyfully that Personalism has nothing in common with Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* which he has replaced with *I love therefore I am*; but in both cases the *self* is the source of truth. Besides, "love" is easier to say than to do and some very wretched deeds have been carried out in the name of love, especially when "love" was part of the "white man's burden."

Moreover, undismayed by the criticism of their philosophy, Mounier and those with him were convinced that Personalism is the solution to the world-crisis. They perceived the task on a grand scale: "Contrary to what takes place with many petty reformers our programme must be cut in a pattern of large dimension. Historically, the crisis that presses upon us is more than a simple political and/or economic crisis." We are witnessing, he lamented, the collapse of a whole area of civilization. The old world was initiated towards the end of the Middle Ages, and climaxed in the industrial age

"capitalistic in structure, liberal in ideology and bourgeois in its ethics."²³ It is a criticism of the post-Christian West that we have heard before, not least of all from Karl Marx.

Admittedly, the Personalist answer differs from materialism by virtue of its spiritual dimension and its call for human cooperation in the solution to that perceived crisis. This is better than depriving the individual man of his moral value in the mill of economic violence and struggle. It is clearly superior to materialism which has no cognizance of man as a spiritual reality. Materialism views the "crisis" as social and economic deprivation. Personalism calls for a spiritual and cultural renovation by common social action whose first principle is the moral value of every human being. Both philosophies believe that "salvation" comes by human effort, without any thought of revelation and grace. Personalism is *auto-soteric* (meaning that one saves himself, being his own Saviour). One might be interested to have a detailed map of what is considered to be the "moral value" of every human being. One answer that Orthodox Christianity would give is that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and, moreover, since we all share in a common human nature, we must all have the same intrinsic value as human beings. When we speak of Personalism as being *auto-soteric*, we cannot express the meaning of this in purely Scriptural terms of salvation (which for Orthodox Christians means deliverance from the bondage of death and power of the Evil-One, and a restoration to the household of the Father). Personalism (though not every one of its professors) would see salvation rather as a positive evolution of social order, and enshrining of one or another concept of human rights (even though one concept of human rights might exclude a portion of society whose rights are not deemed "natural.") This is one of my main objections to the concept of "natural human rights." "Human rights" is a concept created and developed in

human societies, and not without conflict and violence. But the concept of human rights is almost never universal; there are generally some who are omitted from this "universality."

In vain does Personalism seek to reverse the deleterious effects of Scholasticism, the dehumanizing consequences of the Industrial Revolution and of consumer capitalism, rampant irreligiosity, and the conventional ethics of the bourgeoisie. Nor does it adequately resolve the contradiction between morality and moralism.²⁴

3

BORDON PARKER BOWNES, THEORETICIAN OF AMERICAN PERSONALISM

Personalism emerged philosophically linked to the German Idealism which invaded the United States in the nineteenth century. German Idealism held that material things do not exist independently of the mind, but are constructs of the mind. More significantly, it teaches, it is by the categories (ideas) of reason that phenomena are formed. We become aware of the relationship between thought and being by the interaction between thought and the external world. It would appear that Mounier was not much interested in Idealism although its tenets were fundamental to Personalism. As with the teachers of Idealism, however, he was opposed to materialism which reduces the individual to something impersonal.

For a *theoretician* of this philosophy, we look to Borden Parker Bownes, Professor of Philosophy at Boston University. He was the founder and popularizer of American Personalism. He was also keenly devoted to elaborating its metaphysics. Reality, he wrote, is known by persons, society is a community of self-conscious persons, a society of "interacting persons." Put another way, human reality is the person that

acts on or which is acted upon by another. All persons, whether individually or collectively, share in "the living experience of intelligence itself." But is not such "reality" only an adjective masquerading as a noun?

Bownes described himself as a theist. He referred to God as "world-ground" and, therefore, "implicit in everything" and "the postulate of our total life" (perhaps something like Paulo Coelho's "world spirit?"). For Bownes, God is "the Supreme Person" to which human persons are analogous. Bownes rejected the idea that God is the impersonal Absolute of Hegel, if only because the Absolute is completely devoid of moral attributes. It is fatal to religion which is essential to the personal development of human beings. Moreover, he asserts, if in God there are any limitations, they are self-imposed. Bownes was careful not to let divine omnipotence tread upon human freedom.²⁵ To those who argued that the existence of evil placed restrictions on the divine Will, he replied that the problem of evil has no "speculative solution."²⁶

Bownes offers arguments for theism. The universe is intelligible with its order, design, teleology, and the fact of man's finite intelligence. In fact, any evidence of intelligibility in the universe is a clue that the external world is intelligible to the mind; and, on account of the rationality of the universe we have a convincing argument for theism. Furthermore, he argues, unless we assume that the world is essentially a realm of thought, there can be no knowledge at all. The fact that the mind has categories is no evidence that categories explain the mind. Accordingly, the "active intelligence" shows the validity of the metaphysical deduction of the unity, identity and causality from the idea of being.²⁷ If, Bownes asserts, we concede to someone like Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) that the Deity is "unknowable," we must surrender any hope of morality. Indeed, an unknowable God is no better than no God²⁸ and, as Dostoevsky says: "if there is no God, then all

things are permissible, even murder."²⁹ Bownes seeks to protect himself with the appeal to the idea of mystery.

Bownes held that we must recognize the existence of God as "the Supreme Person" (a personal Being), because as Being He interacts with His creation, with time, which gives time relevance, and His Power alone can explain world-order in relation to world change (evolution). Orthodoxy would argue that God is "beyond being," but would not suggest that He is not a "personal God," nor that He does not commune with and sustain His creation. However, in theistic Personalism we can detect a flavour of pantheism, first of all because it does not distinguish between energy and essence.³⁰

For Bownes, we have no proof of human freedom without God. At this point, Bownes attempts to answer another philosophical objection to his theism: how can man be free if God knows everything he does? He replied that God does not know a person's specific choices. Might it not have been better for Bownes to have postulated that God has chosen to be ignorant of human actions? In this case, however, the Omniscience of God would suffer. Only the theory of a "limited Deity" is left to him. As we shall see, it was the position taken by Berdyaev.

With this theology in hand, Bownes developed an ethics to which most Personalists would not object. Asceticism is not central to it and the reality of sin is no impediment to the service of the general good. He does seem to have considered that the impartial and unselfish will is not only an uncommon phenomenon, but its application is often impeded by mood or passion, public indifference or political opposition. He is certainly right that abstractions such as "virtue" or "happiness" or "pleasure" are worthless unless human will and intellect have contacted reality – whatever, philosophically, that may be. One is not certain if this "reality" is a metaphor for the unknown, or just an adjective aspiring to be a noun. Bownes

was equally correct to believe that the greatest need of ethical practice is the serious and thoughtful application of the mind to the problem of life and conduct. In all this, the basic flaw was failure to ascertain the nature of the God to whom he had related his ethical theory. Perhaps he leaves us with a form of Kantian autonomous morality and a deity who does little more than nod his head in approval.

Bownes claimed to have been a theist, but His God was not identified, as it was in the Personalism of Jacques Maritain or Jean Danielou, with the Holy Trinity. In any case, no Personalist worshipped the God of the early Church fathers, and this fact is reflected in their understanding of the man and his good. Bownes would have agreed with Pope John-Paul II that self-mastery not self-assertion is the index of a truly human freedom, but Bownes gives us no programme for the attainment of the first and the purgation of the second. *Neither he nor the Pope seem to have any notion that self-mastery is much more than repressing what is natural to our nature.* "Thoughtfully and freely channelling the natural instincts of mind and body into actions that deepen my humanity"³¹ is impossible if undertaken without recognizing man's "darkened mind" and distorted will which he cannot himself alter. Indeed, repression may only make the darkness more stifling. It can create in man a building pressure and frustration that can explode in most unpleasant ways. Repression is not synonymous with self-mastery. One may call upon men to act together in order to participate in common thought and action, but the experience of the human race has demonstrated that, without Divine intervention—which Bownes does not clearly kneed into his philosophy—human cooperation is generally very brief and often leads to greater evil.

Nicholas Berdyaev was an associate of the Solovevian brotherhood³² which was ejected from Russia after the Communist Revolution. He brought with him to Europe a philosophy of Personalism which led William Miller to describe him as "the prophet of the Catholic Worker Movement." Others went further, and Paul Maurin lauded him as "the Prophet of the twentieth century."³³ Berdyaev did not bring a social agenda or a political schema to the cause, but its metaphysical, romantic if not Gnostic, presuppositions. Berdyaev should not be thought of as representing Orthodox Christian theology; indeed to think of him as an Orthodox Christian at all is to give the term a very elastic definition.

Berdyaev's Personalism begins with a critique of the Western world. We are, he correctly observes, passing through "the crisis of the Christian world," that is, "a crisis within Christianity itself." As it is presently practised, Christianity is no longer relevant; and in fact it has contributed to the present dilemma. It has encouraged, if not spawned banality and bourgeoisie, legalism and rationalism, collectivism and individualism. Berdyaev sees Christianity as not concerned with an earthly future but rather as stalled by its worldview. We are, as it were, in an *entr'acte* and for that reason are experiencing a time of suffering. We are living in an era in which man is deprived of his dignity and freedom and, therefore of his happiness and perfection.

There is something more: if man is to regain the lost virtues of dignity and freedom, he must be redefined; and indeed so must God and reality. Our clue to all these truths is Christ Himself: the God-man. The great error of Western Christianity was to place the task of regenerating the world either in the hands of God *or* man. The truth ought to be found in the cooperation between God *and* man, a proposition that sounds deceptively similar to the Orthodox Christian doctrine of *synergism*. Berdyaev has a valid point, but not a

valid conclusion. Even worse, Berdyaev thinks, there has been a failure to recognise the reason for the tragedy or to raise any questions about it. Christians, he surmises, should have turned to the Gnostics who were long ago aware that revelation and absolute truth are adapted to the men who receive it, but, for some reason, Christianity has chosen to ignore this fact. In other words, we are now compelled to reevaluate, if not transform the Christian Faith, because its present form it is irrelevant. Traditional Christianity was given to another people at another time.

Berdyaev's *synergism* (cooperation) appears more as a *project* shared by God and man for the restructuring of human institutions. Philosopher David Cain³⁴ reminds us that *synergism* between God and man is always radically asymmetrical." Orthodox Christianity fully acknowledges man's freedom. God offers His love and grace for the regeneration and restoration of man, and man may freely chose to cooperate with that love and grace in working out his salvation. The idea that God and man cooperate in creating a utopian system on earth is in no way an aspect of this *synergism*.

Berdyaev describes the man who, with Christ, hopes to transform the world as a genius, the creator of new things by his freedom. He is beyond the good and evil which are the proper condition of the fallen man. He may not be perfect, but his imperfection is a spur to excellence, towards greater creativity (which, incidentally, was Berdyaev's concept of freedom). "True creativeness" is linked to the Holy Spirit. It is always in the Spirit, he observed, for only in the Spirit can there be that union of grace and freedom which is inherent to creativity. Of necessity, therefore, acts of freedom are also acts of the works of the Spirit. Hence, it is no great leap in logic to describe those acts as "ethical."

To begin with, ethics must inquire into the moral

significance of all creative work, even if it has no direct relation to moral life. Art and knowledge have a moral significance, like all activities which create higher values. There are, of course, personal values: a belief, a mission, principles; and, also, cultural values which are norms of acceptable thought and behaviour. For Berdyaev, such values are created and, considering the moral and spiritual condition of most men, creativity must be the privilege of the genius. He refers to such creativity as "theurgical" (the creation of being). The "new man" must work together with God to produce the "new age." And here, any relationship to the Orthodox Christian concept of *synergism* collapses.

Berdyaev writes beautifully and his philosophy is enticing. He tells us that to reach that time, that "new age," we must struggle to open the way for the development of the Person whose heart will not rest until it abides in that transcendent realm of beauty and freedom. This is the reason, incidentally, that Berdyaev rejected both Capitalism and Communism. The Capitalism, he said, destroys man's eternal spirit but forces labour to depend on power to achieve man's ends. Communism has "killed God" and, therefore, takes the religious element out of his life. Of course, both deny that Personality is the central category of value, the value of the Divine and human existence. They deny that the Person of man is the analogy of God. It is inevitable, then, that in these systems the Person is relegated to an "individual," that is, a naturalistic and biological category, while in fact, Personality is a religious and spiritual one. "The individual is part of the species, it springs from the species and may isolate itself without conflict. It is a biological process: it is born and dies. But Personality is not generated, it is created by God. It is God's idea, God's conception which springs up in eternity."³⁵

To repeat the essence of Berdyaev's thought in this area, Personality creates itself, and exists by its own destiny. The

individual is the objectified moment in nature's evolutionary process. The enemy of Personality is the community, because the socialization of man abrogates the freedom of spirit and conscience. "The socialization of morality implies the tyranny of society and of public opinion over the spiritual life of man, and his moral valuation," asserted Berdyaev.

Berdyaev distinguished between collectivism and *soborny*,³⁶ the Russian word given prominence by the nineteenth century lay theologian Alexis Khomiakov. Berdyaev does not use the term, however, in a strictly Orthodox Christian sense as Khomiakov did.

Soborny, in its Orthodox context, is community in the sense of "commonweal," the common good. It recognises both the personhood and individuality of each, and the positive aspect of the community. I want to suggest also, the idea that we know ourselves only in relation to other people. The fulness of our personhood includes our relation to others. The broader concept of *soborny* includes such concepts, although literally translated it would indicate the Greek concept of catholicity: a fulness of community which does not impinge on the personhood of the participants in the community. Collectivism drowns the Personality in the crowd of individuals who are in fact, spectators. In terms of the Orthodox Church, *soborny* refers to a visible unity of Persons, who share the unity of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the realm of freedom wherein the human will acts effectively in the realization of the ends which the Person was intended to achieve and enjoy. It is an association of free persons who are unified by the Holy Spirit in the common cause of the Eucharist. Nowhere is there a loss of free will.

Berdyaev's philosophy is attractive if unrealistic. His religious vision is open to valid criticism from an Orthodox point of view. We have yet to examine his idea of God and man, the so-called "mystery of human life" which he identified

with "the mystery of Godmanhood."³⁷ We must not be led astray by his fascinating allusions to the Trinity and the Incarnation. He offered exciting ideas about man as a spiritual being whose free will (creativity) is essential to our understanding of man and his destiny. As we shall see, however, Berdyaev's triadology and christology calls his Christianity into question. What we have seen thus far is only the surface of a theology. His ideas about human dignity and freedom are not conventional, nor is his teaching about man, good and evil. To comprehend Berdyaev's philosophy we must look to "the dialectic of the Divine and the human in German thought" to which he was devoted. The father of this "dialectic" and, therefore, all German Idealism is the Gnostic, Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), without whom there would have been no Fichte, Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, and no Berdyaev.

The basic assumption of Berdyaev's philosophy is "the coincidence of opposites" (*coincidentia oppositorum*) which applies not only to man and nature, but to God or Trinity (*Bog, Gott, Theos, Deus*). He emerges from the Abyss, the Absolute, the infinite, incomprehensible and bottomless nothing (*Bogchestvo, Gottheit, Theotes, and Deitas*). Thus the "birth of God" (*theogony*) is the beginning of the world-process. There is no creation from nothing, for "nothing" has no meaning outside the Absolute. The world is, therefore, erected from the mutable substance of God. He is the "unfolding God" out of which all things come; and all things are born, directly or indirectly, from Him (*cosmogony*). God lives so long as the world exists, because the explication of God in time is merely the evolution of man and the cosmos. The one cannot exist without the other.

Freedom and evil also leap from the Absolute independently of each other. God, freedom and evil have no control one of the other. They possess the unchanging Absolute; and, therefore, they are, because of their relationship to the

Absolute, both changing and unchanging. The Absolute alone is immutable. Moreover, man contains all three dimensions which means that God is not responsible for evil in the world; nor can he prevent man from choosing, thinking, or acting. At the same time, man may resist God and evil by his freedom. "Personality is not generated; it is created by God. It is God's idea, God's conception, which springs up in eternity. From the point of view of the individual, Personality is a task to be achieved."³⁸

"In other words, the existence of Personality presupposes the existence of God; its value presupposes the supreme value: God. If there is no God., Personality has no moral value and man has no inherent dignity. There is merely the individual entity subordinate to the natural life of the genus," Berdyaev continued. "Personality is the moral principle, and our relation to all other values is determined by reference to it. Hence, the idea of Personality lies at the basis of ethics. An impersonal system of ethics is a *contradictio in adjecto*. Personality is a higher value than the state, the nation, mankind or nature; and indeed is not part of that series."³⁹ In other words, because the Personality comprehends all things within Itself, It is a microcosm.

Furthermore, Personality develops by virtue of its communion with other Persons (*soborny*). It is nurtured by fellowship "within its genus." The complexity of man lies in the fact that a man is both an individual and the Person as a spiritual being, especially in his freedom. On account of his unique place in the universe, his Personality, man has supreme place in the hierarchy of values, He is the mediator between God and himself. It is clear from Berdyaev's metaphysics that man — specifically the Personality — is divine. He sought to protect himself by arguing that the human species was created by God, but God with His limited powers could not create anything out of nothing (*ouk on*). There is no "nothing." The

only "nothingness" (*me on*) is the "nothingness" of the Absolute or Abyss from which God, evil and freedom spring. It is for that reason that Berdyaev contends that all is ultimately *meonic*.⁴⁰ He described freedom as "*meonic* freedom."

We need go no further in our treatment of Berdyaev's theory of "freedom." He complained in his "philosophical autobiography" (*Dream and Reality*) that a certain Orthodox cleric referred to him ironically as "the captive of freedom." He was "captive" of much more. He failed to think outside the perimeters established by Western philosophy. In this regard, Berdyaev was a rationalist. It may be argued, also, that although he invoked the names of Christ and the Trinity, His "God" is not the God of the Orthodox Church into which he was baptized. It would be better to call him a pantheist. His Personalism is a testament to his loss of faith.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned that Personalism arose within the Western heritage. The principles upon which its doctrines stand were born of the categories and values of a mind-set whose ancestry is the Latin Middle Ages. Not a few Roman Catholics credit Augustine with having developed the first Christian Personalism. In any case, there is an historical truth in the emergence of Personalism: the inseparability of God and man: alter your conception of God and you will inevitably alter your conception of man. I am convinced that the reverse is also true. This is the trail followed by modernity, of which Personalism is an offspring.⁴¹

To be modern, wrote one philosopher, is to "think modern," to believe that modernity is in possession of "blossoming humanity."⁴² Necessarily, then, modernity has abandoned all "tradition," that is, the Greek and Christian

ideas of God and man. The old idea of God as providential and revelatory or man as a "political" or "rational being" are supposedly bankrupt. Even more repugnant to moderns is the fact that man is a "substance," a fixed nature. And, of courses, there is nothing more abhorrent to modern thought than the ascetic and his devotion to "the supernatural state."

Although he may live in a country, obey its laws and pay its taxes, the ultimate loyalty of "the new man" is this world: to live in it and to perfect it. There is nothing more precious than "freedom" or "liberty." He was eventually defined as "a being that has rights." Under these conditions, he is at liberty to work for the establishment of a just social and moral order, which, as Hobbes observed, neither the Greek nor Christian Commonwealths ever provided. He must therefore, have "an entitlement of rights" which involves the fundamental right to exist and, consequently, the ability to develop his own personality.⁴³ This requires a new political order, an order that is impossible if we fail to replace the Christian idea of the city with another. This can be achieved only if the West's Scholastic legacy is utterly eviscerated—*Carthago delenda est*.

From the eighteenth century to the present, the God of Christian theology was studied under the assumption that it was the Biblical God who was being examined. He was in fact "the God of the philosophers and the savants." There was something ironical in the proclamation of the Enlightenment that the Divinity created the world and left it to man to perfect. The dualism between thought and being (not nature and grace) as the insuperable reality—a philosophical conundrum which has been the surd of modern philosophy since that time, especially with the "transcendental metaphysics" of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).⁴⁴ He was confident that his philosophy was the sure path to "freedom."

Nothing was more suggestive to future thinkers than Kant's substitution of "the conditions for the possibility of

experience" for the traditional idea of man as a "substance." In addition, Kant did not want to rely upon God for freedom and moral goodness. For him and many of his colleagues the Bible is not the inspired Word of God, but the repertoire of stories filled with subjective and edifying images. For those who find these writings helpful, they might contribute to "the feeling whose special office is to impel the improvement of life."⁴⁵ Finally, he left to modernity both skepticism and a dogmatism which reinforce each other in their repudiation of anything which dares to violate or restrict human rights.⁴⁶

One thing had been very clearly asserted by modernity: its philosophers had demonstrated that a human nature (an inviolable substance) could not be proved to exist. If man has no human nature, he has no fallen nature, the concept of which had for so long deprived man of his rights, especially the right to determine what he was to become. No wonder monarchy and aristocracy were abolished—so interlocked were these with the old theology and anthropology. Mikhail Bakunin was not the only thinker to believe that the existence of the state (monarchy) is linked with the existence of God; hence, with the disappearance of the one will follow the disappearance of the other. If I remember correctly, Albert Camus lamented that the death of the king silenced the voice of God on earth.

Nietzsche declared the death of God (but in the atmosphere of the idea of the *deus absconditus*, why not). Naively, he asserted that man was now free to become whatever he wishes. He can, as one school of Existentialism said, create his own essence. Twentieth century Personalists came to the conclusion that "the cultural death of God" is an invitation to anarchy. It was implicit in their thinking that a man is a being who has rights, but also that this dogma could not have been possible if his being was substantial. The Personalists saw that rights and self-determination had their dangers, not the least of

which was a society that forgot its poor, infirm and homeless. The response to this threat came primarily, albeit not exclusively, from the Catholic left. Mounier and the Catholic Worker Movement envisioned a world of freedom with the Sermon on the Mount as its moral guide.

Whatever its form, Personalism is another anti-Christian philosophy. Jacques Maritain, Pope John-Paul II, Nicholas Berdyaev, John Macmurray, J.H. Oldham, and others. hoped to create a Christian Personalism as a possible answer to the contemporary secular environment. It is likely that this is also both the philosophy and the motor that drives the reductionist notions of Ecumenism. Ecumenism solves nothing but only weakens the fabric of the faith, and ultimately contributes much to secularism. We are not speaking about interfaith dialogue, for dialogue is a necessity of all civilised intercourse, just as tolerance is a necessity for any hope of peace. Nevertheless, the idea that Personalism (and Ecumenism) could preserve Christianity by another synthesis inevitably fails, if only because the religion they have espoused is itself only an amplification of defective elements in contemporary Christianity. They had forgotten the fathers of the Church. Unlike them, Personalists no longer believed that Christian truth comes by the Christian tradition preserved and protected by both the Greek and Latin Orthodox Church fathers. Personalists do not seem interested in life eternal, but in a "better world" through organization and ethical conduct. Freedom is the way to that end: freedom as inherent rights, by which each person is free to be whatever he desires in accord with secular ideas freedom—surely a recipe for chaos, cruelty and anarchy. Such things ultimately lead to dictatorships and a complete loss of freedom.

But how does the Personalist know that he is free or that the ideals in which he has invested his freedom are true? He cannot create the reality in which he lives. Human experience

shows that sometimes our good intentions have evil consequences. Personalists, in general, have not sought to expel the passions of the inner man by grace, as patristic Christianity demands; nor have they even hearkened to the call of the Greeks to bring the passions under the control of reason. They have rejected both in favour of "the third man," the timeless labourer and consumer who may despair of the good, but never of himself. He cannot define the good and he cannot know his end, placing his faith in the force of history. Personalism gives us no idea of what this actually means.

ENDNOTES:

1. Note that we are talking about a synthesis, not the use of methodology. It is true that some Orthodox philosophers and writers have used the methodology of Phenomenology in their works.

*2. As an example of the use of vocabulary, the word *theoria* is used. In its Orthodox Christian use, *theoria* cannot be separated from the action of grace. It does not mean simply "contemplation." It means "vision," in the spiritual sense of revelation given by grace. In the process of prayerful contemplation in a life deeply surrendered to Christ, divine grace gives a revelation as a vision in the mind. Such a revelation cannot be adequately expressed in human language and so a form of metaphor is used to express the mystery. For example, **St Gregory of Nyssa, -----(Not Three Gods, ----)***

*3. **The Conscious Universe: Part and Whole in Modern Physical Theory,** Springer-Verlag, NY, 1990 p.102.*

4. One must note also that many of our educated clergy and the Hellenizers among modern Greek theologians are not so clear on these matters. Like the Liberal Protestants who accept at face value the critiques of modern scholars about Jesus Christ (and begin to deny the Divinity, miraculous birth and resurrection of Christ) there are those in the Orthodox Church who are enamoured of the Western philosophers who see Platonism in places where it does not exist.

5. Unknowable in His essence. We have a personal relationship with God through His uncreated energies, in which He reveals Himself to us. Of course, our relationship with Christ is with the God Who has revealed Himself to us in the flesh.

*6. **From Mystique to Politique: An Introduction to Personalism,** p. 1*

7. John Paul II wrote his doctoral thesis on Personalism and Phenomenology. His treatise was fairly well ignored in Vatican circles because it was not "Thomist." Nevertheless, it is a brilliant paper.

8. For an Orthodox Christian assessment of Kant's ideas about ethics and morality, see **The Moral Idea of the Main Dogmas of the Faith**, Khrapovitsky, Antony (Synaxis Press) 1998.

9. **From Mystique to Politique: An Introduction to Personalism**, p. 6-7.

10. At first reading, this sounds very close to the Orthodox Christian position against dualism. In the words of **Saint Irenae of Lyons (+203)**: "Now the soul and the body are certainly a part of the man, but certainly not the man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and union of the soul receiving the spirit...and the admixture of that fleshly nature...For that flesh which has been moulded is not a perfect man in itself, but the body of a man, and a part of a man. Neither is the soul itself...the man; but it is the soul of a man, and part of a man. (**Against Heresies**, Book 4, Ch.6:1). And St Photios the Great, refuting Origenism, concurs: "The name 'man', according to the most truthful and natural expression, applies to neither the soul without [its] body, nor to the body without [its] soul, but to that composition of soul and body made into a unique form of beauty. But Origen says that the soul alone is the man, as did Plato." (**On The Resurrection**, (against Origen), 1:5.

11. For a further discussion of essence, existence and hypostasis, see my **Freedom to Believe**, (Synaxis Press) 1998.

12. I suspect that the attempt to translate hypostasis as 'person' is one of the sources of some difficulty with the concept of the Trinity. To say that there is one God in three Hypostases is not the same as to say that there are three "persons" in the Trinity. "Persons" indicates a distinction that is difficult to reconcile with a one essence. As an example, a hypostasis is seen when wine is set to "settle." The hypostasis is what becomes visible and distinct, but not separate from the wine. It is visible and distinct, but remains "of the essence" of the wine. This is clearly a metaphor for some greater mystery. St Gregory..... speaking of the doctrine of the Trinity, tells us.....

13. Synaxis Press, 1998; 2006.

14. David Cain comments that "the distinction between Personalism and 'Individualism' in the thought of Mounier is important. How different from "the individual" (den enkelte) of Søren Kierkegaard; though Kierkegaard is often interpreted [wrongly] as advocating, if not "solipsism," then individual isolation..." (From a letter to the author of this paper by Dr David Cain, Professor of at University of Martha Washington).

15. *ibid*, Khrapovitsky.

16. See my "Democracy and the Law of Diminishing Returns," in **Collected Essays**. As with the law of diminishing returns in economics, liberal democracy can invest so much in individual rights and freedoms that no one in the society is really free. Often enough the breakdown of the liberties would begin with a

real of perceived necessity to watch people and monitor their activities. When the individualistic liberties become so frightening that people will yield to being constantly scrutinised in order to feel safer and more secure, then we have certainly reached the point of diminishing returns in democracy.

17. We cannot here explore the question of evil and how a person becomes evil. Orthodoxy contends that evil has no ontological being. A person may become evil, thoroughly evil, but evil itself is not manifested as a person even though a person can manifest evil. The problem resolves on the use of one's energies.

18. Letter reviewing our article on Ikons of the Last Judgment (Appendix 3).

19. Homily 58; see also Homily 60, and St Ephraim the Syrian, Homily on the End, lines 30-31.

20. Saint Isaak of Nineveh, Homily 123:2.

21. The Divine Names, 7:7.

22. The first parable in Matthew Chapter 25 is the one about the wise and foolish virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise and took oil for their lamps, 5 were foolish and did not. St. John Chrysostom, in his homily on this chapter, asks, "What was the oil that was missing from the lamps of the foolish virgins?" It was the oil of humanity, he answers. The foolish virgins had no humanity, no care for humanity. Indeed, all had equal virtues: they were all virgins. All had some kind of belief: they went out to meet the bridegroom and all carried lamps. Without the oil of humanity, however, they could not enter the bridal chamber.

23. Personalist Manifesto, p. 8.

24. Morality is based in unselfish love, and the ideas of some versions Personalism profess the same. However, true morality requires a spiritual struggle for an inner transformation of the heart. It involves work on aspects of the moral conscience than philanthropy alone. Moralism is an outward fulfilment of a set of moral precepts, or rather we should say ethical precepts. It attempts to resolve social issues by moralising them rather than approaching them as human problems that need to be dealt with on a more firm and civil basis than moralism provides.

25. Whereas for Kierkegaard, human freedom is a manifestation of, a triumph of, divine omnipotence

26. Studies in Christianity. Boston, 1910, p. 51.

27. Metaphysics. Boston, 1898, p. 296.

28. This is at the heart of the so-called Palamite Controversy. The Latin

29. We must cite a beautiful paragraph from Dr. David Cain here, because it is a gem not to be concealed: "I remember this, perhaps wrongly, as 'if there is no God, all things are lawful, even crime.' But this is not 'Dostoyevsky' but Ivan Karamazov. Ivan's words, which Smerdyakov drinks in and acts on, are

commonly interpreted according to the view of God as heavenly police person: You better do good or God will get you! But I wonder if another interpretation is not operative here: the dignity of human beings is bestowed in the divine love for them. This divine "valuation" makes us ends and not means. Apart from a God and this God's love for us, we are nothing; and violation of nothing is . . . nothing."

30. *Energy and Essence*: *****

31. ***The Acting Person: A Contribution to Phenomenological Anthropology*** (1979)

32. Along with Berdyaev, the most eminent disciples of Vladimir Soloviev (1849-1900) were: Serge Bulgakov, Pavel Florenski, Semen Frank, and Nikoli Losski. Although some of them thought of themselves as theologians, they were disciples of a philosophy that is antithetical to Orthodox Christianity.

33. ***A Harsh and Dreadful Love: Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement***. Marquette University (2005).

34. Professor of at University of Martha Washington in

35. ***The Destiny of Man***. Trans. by N. Duddington. (London, 1954), p. 55.

36. (define the word)

37. ***The Divine and the Human***. Trans. by R.M. French. (London, 1949), p. 22.

38. Loc. Cit.

39. Loc. Cit.

40. (define)

41. Gabriel Vahanian declares, "From the death of God to the death of man there was but a short step. And it was taken rather quickly" (***God and Utopia: The Church in a Technological Civilization*** [New York: The Seabury Press, 1977], p. xi). The only way is "top down" (God-man); bottom-up (man-God) is no way and no God at the vert least because of the (sinful) impotence of "man," his innate proclivity to habitually misuse his energies, even when he truly desires to follow the good. Man is essentially good, but must struggle, with the help of God's grace, to overcome the roadblocks in his nature, his passions, that prevent him from actualising this alone. Man needs Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit in order to accomplish his regeneration and restoration (paraphrased and elaborated from a comment of David Cain).

42. Manent, P., ***The City of Man***. Trans. by M.A. LePain. (Princeton, 1998), p. 51

43. ***Leviathan***, ch. 21, 32, 44.

44. For an Orthodox Christian discussion of Kant's "autonomous morality" see St. Antony Khrapovitsky, ***The Moral Idea of the Main Dogmas of the Faith*** (Synaxis Press, 2000).

45. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. by L. White. (1959), p. 40.

46. *Manent*, p. 146.