

The  
GLOBAL CONGRESS  
of the  
WORLD'S RELIGIONS



Proceedings

1980-1982

*Edited by*

Henry O. Thompson

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GLOBAL CONGRESS  
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WORLD'S RELIGIONS



**GCWR**

Proceedings

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## DEDICATION

This Volume is  
dedicated to  
David S.C. Kim  
in  
Gratitude  
for  
his  
Continuous Support  
of the  
Global Congress of the World's Religions

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## THE GLOBAL CONGRESS 1980–1982

This is the fourth volume on the Global Congress of the World's Religions. The earlier volumes contained the proceedings of preliminary meetings at San Francisco, Boston and Los Angeles. The first volume also included two conferences on African religion(s) at Barrytown, N.Y. and Bristol, England. All three are available from the Rose of Sharon Press, GPO, Box 2432, New York, N.Y.

The present volume includes the proceedings of Miami, Florida and Seoul, Korea. In 1980, the GCWR was officially incorporated as a nonprofit organization. The Miami meeting marked that official beginning. We include here Dr. Francis Clark's address to the GCWR, and the perspective statements by people from different religious tradition. The discussion that followed brings many more perspectives to bear.

In both the Miami and Seoul meetings we were privileged to hear progress reports on the African Institute for the Study of Human Values. It is progress, indeed, for as one can read in the following pages, the Institute is now an established fact.

In Seoul, the GCWR was twice blessed. The first blessing was an address by Dr. Philip H. Hwang of Dongguk University. As noted there, Dr. Hwang speaks out of his knowledge of several traditions. The second blessing came from His Holiness the Dalai Lama whose personal representatives shared his vision for peace. Several others spoke out of their traditions. In a sense, of course, each of us speaks out of our own tradition. The discussion then represents a sharing of traditions—a sharing that enriched the participants and which, hopefully, the reader will also find enriching.

In and around these annual meetings, there have been several regional meetings. The meetings in Sri Lanka are recorded as part of the Seoul discussion. Dr. Padmasiri de Silva gave a report and Dr. David Kalupahana added some further comments. Dr. de Silva's paper, "Religious Pluralism: A Buddhist Perspective," will be published in *The Experiences of Religious Diversity*, ed. John Hick and Hasan Askari (London, 1982). Hopefully the other papers

can be published soon.

Dr. Isma'il al Faruqi conducted a meeting in Islamabad and his report is printed here in full. Excerpts of both the Sri Lanka and Islamabad meetings were published in the GCWR Newsletters 1 and 2. In May, 1982, Dr. Nagaraja Rao convened a session in Mysore with the theme "Approaches to World Unity." In June, 1982, Drs. R.S. Mishra and L.N. Sharma convened a meeting in Varanasi on the theme "Religion: Today and Tomorrow." Selected papers from Mysore are included here. Hopefully the addresses and discussions can be published soon.

The Trustees of the GCWR, advisers, associate trustees, committee members and friends met for long hours in Miami and Seoul. Much of the time was taken up with preparing for the incorporation and clarifying bylaws. In Seoul, the trustees received a position paper from Dr. J. Gordon Melton. It is published here along with selected other papers as a matter of general interest for those concerned with the GCWR. The Executive Committee of the Trustees met in N.Y.C. in February, 1982. Considerable discussion continued on the purpose of the GCWR and on the ever important questions of financing. The Executive Committee voted to establish seven task forces to carry on the work of the GCWR.

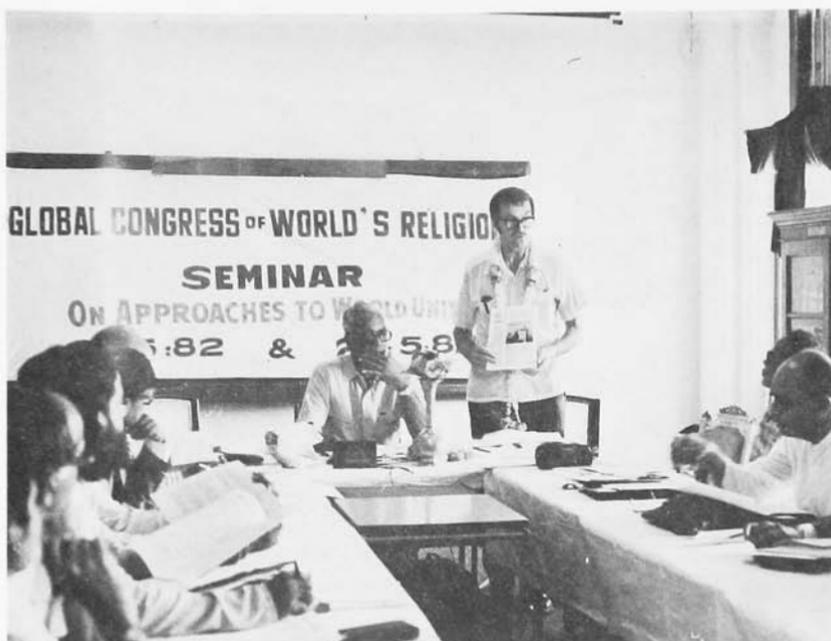
Much of the text has been edited from audio tape recordings. While every effort was made to ensure accuracy in the transcript, there were a variety of problems such as speakers talking too softly or too quickly to catch all their words. Apologies are offered in advance for any errors in this final version.

A great deal of "behind-the-scenes" effort has gone into these meetings and the preparation of this text. A number of the students of the Unification Theological Seminary helped arrange rooms, manned information booths, arranged meals and refreshments, made signs and banners, prepared the first newsletter, wrote letters, helped develop mailing lists, created the book for signatures of those supporting the GCWR, arranged audio taping, photographs, typed, read proof for this volume, etc. God bless them one and all. They are the unsung heroines and

heros of the GCWR. Special thanks to the Rev. Royal Davis for his review of McMahon's *Bergson* in this larger context.

Ms. Robin Clune Roman did a prodigious amount of typing and re-typing, both of this text and of trustee minutes, in addition to an enormous correspondence with trustees and friends of the GCWR. Her work is here gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due to the staff for the final work of printing and the production of this volume. Mr. Arthur Herstein served as production editor, guiding the process from manuscript to final text.

Henry O. Thompson  
Secretary to the  
Board of Trustees



MYSORE: Vice-Chancellor Hegby presides as Dr. Henry O. Thompson presents the story of the Global Congress of the World's Religions. Photo courtesy Dr. Nagaraja Rao.



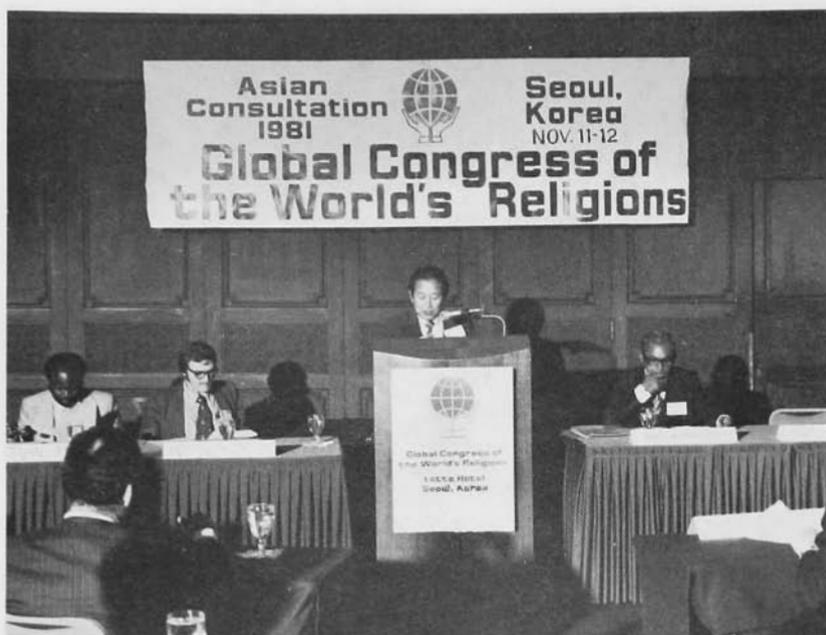
MYSORE: The Seminar Group photograph. Photo courtesy Dr. Nagaraja Rao.



VARANASI: "Religion: Today and Tomorrow." Photo courtesy Dr. Nagaraja Rao.



MYSORE: The Discussion continues over lunch, in a lighter vein. Photo courtesy Dr. Nagaraja Rao.



SEOUL: Dr. Philip H. Hwang presenting his paper, "An Interreligious Dialogue."



SEOUL: Representatives of His Holiness, The Dalai Lama.



SEOUL: The audience on November 11, 1981.



The Executive Committee Meeting of the GCWR in New York City, February, 1982.



MIAMI: The Trustees meeting before the Inauguration.



MIAMI: UTS President David S.C. Kim, Dr. Henry O. Thompson, Dr. Kurt Johnson, at the Trustee meeting.



MIAMI: Dr. Francis Clark presenting the Inaugural Address.



MIAMI: A high moment—after years of planning, the GCWR has been officially inaugurated.

SECTION A  
THE MIAMI PROCEEDINGS

THE GLOBAL CONGRESS  
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

MIAMI, FLORIDA  
NOVEMBER 30–DECEMBER 1, 1980

I  
THE INAUGURATION OF  
THE GLOBAL CONGRESS  
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

*DR. WARREN LEWIS:* Welcome to this solemn and festive inaugural ceremony of the Global Congress of the World's Religions. For more than four years, an ever-increasing body of individuals, committed to the ideal of worldwide interreligious dialogue and cooperation, has been working towards this hour of formal inauguration.

We met first in November, 1977, following the International Conference on The Unity of The Sciences in San Francisco. Since that time there have been other meetings in a variety of countries and other meetings following the ICUS in Boston and Los Angeles. The published proceedings of our conferences are available. We have incorporated ourselves legally. We have laid the groundwork for a series of interreligious consultations in several regions of the earth with the intention of inviting the religions of those regions to tell us what the agenda for the GCWR should be, rather than our telling them what it should be. We have elected officers for the GCWR. We have designated working task forces to develop a good number of activities, including a fundraising program.

We plan, *Deo volente* (God willing), to have a general convocation of as many of the world's religions as are willing to come and take their part in a public forum of all the religions. Participation may be official or unofficial.

We shall address ourselves to the issues of religion. These include the issues between the religions and the issues confronting the human family with the sincere hope of being able to do something about those issues.

Tomorrow morning at 9:00 AM in this room we shall make a full report to you of our activities over the past year and bring you up to date on what we are doing. At that time we will especially invite you to make whatever critique and commentary you please. But above all we shall be encouraging you to industrious collaboration with us in your sphere, your region of the earth, and in your religion. Indeed without you, our progress would slow and stop. With you, the religions of the world shall one day gather in common purpose. Today we shall hear six responses from six individuals. They do not speak as official representatives of their religion. They do greet the GCWR on its birthday on behalf of the several religious traditions in which they stand, in which they live. The first to speak is Sri Radhakrishna.

*SRI RADHAKRISHNA:* Friends: I rise this afternoon to personally witness and greet the birth of the Global Congress of the World's Religions. I am conscious that this is neither the first, nor the last, attempt at a global level to bring men and women of different religious persuasions together to generate levels of understanding, awareness, and consciousness about each other's traditions and religious beliefs, and to provide a forum for interaction, deeper study and common endeavor. These attempts have a rhythm of their own, are much needed to fill a gap, and provide continuity. I see in this continued renewal an underlying hope that our effort, in some small way, is sufficient to dispel enveloping darkness so light persists.

I convey greetings to you from my fellow co-religionists, and others actually engaged in interfaith or multi-religious endeavors. As a Hindu, I've been brought up in a tradition of synthesis and assimilation. It is an approach to God that does not negate other approaches. Leading reformers in recent years, such as Vivekananda and Gandhi, have emphasized this approach. In a pluralistic situation such as we have in India, this is not merely a practical and

pragmatic approach. It is more than that. It is a spiritual need. One of our leaders said that the days of politics in religion are over. We enter the era of signs and spirituality. So we need to seek the deeper spiritual insight of religion. We need to apply these insights scientifically to modern problems. It is our hope that with a growing world consciousness, our small effort will provide a forum for one world increasingly drawn closer by science, communication, and technology. It will provide a basis for the individual in society.

Our concern at the Global Congress is for man, no matter where he belongs (to what race or country), for the whole man, not aspects or portions. Our concern is not merely the future man, but the present man as well as the future man. I see in the Global Congress of the World's Religions this deeper concern and fully support the endeavor. Each one of us can work for this mandate in spite of our limitations. The Global Congress, as you can see, has a colossal task to accomplish. If it is not to be merely words and words, it has to engage itself in a deeper search of spiritual experience. To individuals and groups by study possibly, by prayers if necessary, meditation, fellowship—it has to offer opportunities of conferences, consultation, but also of living together. That includes making efforts in our own lives to approximate to our claims. If this effort is to succeed, and succeed it must, the Congress will also have to consider active tasks of reconciliation as expressions of a deeper concern. It is a combination of all these that may lead us to the fulfillment of our objectives. I am one of those who believe in the efficacy of prayer. I hope and pray that this effort takes the right direction and succeeds. I have faith and confidence that the Global Congress is in the right hands—in the hands of those that have the necessary vision, direction and dynamism needed for this challenging task. There is an invocation in Sanskrit: "Lead us Lord from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from nothing to infinity." May the spirit of this invocation guide us in the days to come. Thank you.

*DR. LEWIS:* The next person to have spoken was Francis Botchway, one of the directors of the African Insti-

tute for the Study of Human Values. The Institute and the Global Congress have grown together more or less as twins over the past few years. Francis has had to fly to Spain. Standing in for him then is Professor Christian R. Gaba, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. He pours the libation today on behalf of the autochthonous religions of Africa. Dr. Gaba.

*DR. CHRISTIAN R. GABA:* As Dr. Lewis has told you, Francis had to leave suddenly for Madrid. But before he left he gave me this written greeting to be read to you at this conference. I am going to read it on his behalf.

Friends, brothers and sisters, I've been given a task too great for me to perform. To represent Africa is indeed an honor. Yet the task of that representation is formidable. But before I perform that task I would like to recognize some African sons present in this room. This is in the great tradition of Africa. Professor Ohin, Professor Dickson, Professor Gaba, Professor Asare Opoku—my valuable colleague Professor Gyekye, Professor Sodipo, Professor Montilus, Professor Asjangba and others. I draw my strength from the collective cosmic computer of these great sons of Africa. We are gathered here today to honor the Global Congress of the World's Religions and to reaffirm the perception that the history of our race is a common study. We who are Africans join you in the affirmation of this noble universal principle. We offer this on behalf of Africa:

Oh Mother Africa.  
 You gave birth to all beings.  
 You who reveal  
 the modality of the cosmos  
 in whom every cosmic fragment  
 is transparent.  
 Your mode of existence  
 gives structure to the world.  
 In you we find  
 the revelations of cosmic suprality.  
 O Mother Africa.  
 You who reveal to us  
 the extra-terrestrial figures  
 of human life.

You who taught us  
that death  
is but another cosmic modality  
of human existence.  
You who taught us  
that life and death  
are ciphers in the cosmic rhythm  
of the universe.  
O Mother Africa.  
You have revealed to us  
the universal generatrix.  
You who taught us  
that the mystery of life  
is to be found  
in the rhythmical renewal of the cosmos.  
O Mother Africa.  
You are the center of the universe.  
The cornerstone of the cosmos.  
O Mother Africa.  
I shall sing praises unto you.

*DR. LEWIS:* Next to speak is Dr. Joseph D. Ben-Dak, Professor of International Management and Peace Studies at the University of Haifa, Israel. Joseph is Jewish.

*DR. J. BEN-DAK:* To say this is very humbling would be an understatement. To be a representative of the Jewish religion anywhere would be difficult. I'm so glad I'm not talking to a Jewish audience.

One of the major problems I think in religion today, as one looks from the point where we are in human history, is that we have spent so much time preaching love for co-religionists, and so little time on love for those who are different from ourselves. My religion has been as sinful in that area as any other religion. It almost seems pathetic to realize how little of the time of people in religion has been spent in what I think should be the most proper job—if job is the term to use—for people involved in the deeper sacred area that we are talking about here. That job is how to love those who are really different from ourselves. This is the most difficult of all jobs, the most difficult of human interactions.

If I have something to pray for in regard to this Con-

gress, it is that I believe that something like that is overdue. Something like that has not been available for a long time. I believe that it is about time to take something like that extremely seriously. For my part at least, I would like to invest as much time as possible to make it a reality. I think the critical dimension is the fact that so much of our theology has been spent on how to love and redeem those who are similar to us. This really critical dimension is one that I always find missing when I read any religious text. I've come to believe that if you really want to know the story of your own religion, and I use the same terms that have been used in the GCWR preamble, you have to realize that a story is not only a story of the past. It is also the story of the future. In order to understand and be prepared in the future, you really have to understand not only what you have done in the past, but how your religion has contributed to other religions as well.

When you look at the interconnections, it is amazing to see how much better you can understand your own religion, if you are really aware of others. Take for instance the story of Jesus in the Last Supper, when he talks about his trial (Luke 22:28). Take this story and consider for instance that you are a Jew and you want to understand the Kiddush on Saturday. You really have no source other than Christian sources. Look up Chapter 22 where you can really understand that there is a direct connection with a Jewish custom that Jesus was utilizing at that time. If you really want to take the strict approach and say you are going to use only Jewish sources to understand a Jewish custom, you really face the fact that you are ignorant about a specific custom that was important in the days of the Second Temple. You really lack information about your own customs.

Take another example. Take the Jihad in Islam. Jihad is today considered among most of my people a very basic tradition of Islam to which one would object. It is the idea of attacking people if they are not Muslim in order to create a world which would be totally Muslim. I'm sure that there are people who would think of this as only in Islam. But it is much more accurate to talk about the concept of Jihad as it is understood in the Koran in the original way it was

understood in the early medieval period. The first interpreters of Muhammad had the correct interpretation. It meant investing oneself in order to make it possible for others to enjoy life. That is, to invest one's effort in making the poor or the people who suffered, or the people who are different from yourself, better off. If one takes this proposition from Islam, one has the most beautiful idea. Once you look at it this way it really makes the whole concept of Jihad not only a proper concept for Muslims but for Jews as well. Then you could really look at the history of wars that are justified by this concept and realize that it was a sort of mistake. Maybe it's about time that we correct our understanding because we really want to live in a future where the religion of love will be the proper way of going about things.

I lead my life most of the time amongst secular people. I don't practice the rituals of a religion but I consider myself extremely and deeply religious because I like to practice religion in every day and every deed that I do. Thus it is very important for me to cooperate in work with people that are like-minded and like-spirited and for that matter like-motivated. Now, if I do not have their religion to relate to, to consider, to work with, what do I really have? Religion, if it is anything at all, is the kind of concept that ties us to a continuing destiny for people. It is something which is before us and after us and the only thing which gives us motivation and makes life worth living.

I really believe that this Congress can provide a vehicle by which we can:

1. Understand each other better.
2. Make a real effort to understand what is different.

This Congress can be a real base, for it can be the proper relationship between us—the future of all of us who are different for we are in fact very similar. Thank you.

*DR. LEWIS:* The next person to speak is Dr. David J. Kalupahana, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. Dr. Kalupahana is a Theravada Buddhist from Sri Lanka. He is the President for Communications of the GCWR.

*DR. DAVID J. KALUPAHANA:* Honored guests, distinguished members of the GCWR. . . . It is with great humility here on this momentous occasion that I speak on behalf of millions of Buddhists the world over. I do not speak as their elected representative but as one who has dedicated his life to the study of that sublime teaching, the message of Gautama the Buddha. It is a message of peace and hope for mankind delivered 2,500 years ago. My earnest hope is that the distinguished leaders of the different Buddhist sects, traditions, and schools will lend their enthusiastic support and encouragement in furthering the goals of the GCWR. I am confident that conforming to the spirit of tolerance and compassion embodied in that ultimate message, Buddhists the world over will join hands with members of other religious faiths in order to work for the betterment of mankind.

We are aware that the GCWR is not the first of its kind. One of the major conferences, held almost a century ago, was the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893. In spite of the competence and sincerity of those who attended that conference, I must say that it was a failure. In our discussion during the past two days, the idea emerged that the GCWR should hold a meeting in 1993 to celebrate the centennial of the Chicago conference. I personally feel that it would be inappropriate to celebrate something that was a failure rather than a success.

At this moment I wish to reflect upon the first paragraph of the "Notes of the Charter" of the GCWR distributed to you.

The Global Congress of the World's Religions is a voluntary association of concerned persons from the broad spectrum of all the world's many religions and spiritual perspectives. It was founded in 1980 to become the ongoing forum where representatives from the plurality of human religious experience could communicate with one another, learn about and from one another, and provide means whereby the deepest and highest motivations of both traditionally religious and other persons of spiritual conviction could be creatively and constructively focused for the good of all.

This means the GCWR recognizes the existence, or at least the fact, of a plurality of religious perspectives in the world. Its goal is to focus the different spiritual convictions creatively and constructively for the good of all. The way this goal is to be achieved is through communicating with one another. The goal is our hope for the future. Let us leave it for a moment.

The Way, as the Chinese call it, the Tao, is our immediate concern. Let us reflect upon that for a moment. We are interested in communicating with one another and learning about one another with all the good faith in the world, with all the modern technology at our disposal. Have we succeeded in communicating with one another, learning about one another? With the sophistication of all the means of communication, with all the satellites out there in space, we are no closer to mutual understanding than 2,000 years or 3,000 years ago. The more developed our means of communication, the greater has been our difference, our mutual distrust.

One possible reason for the failure to communicate with each other, and learn about each other, may be that we have adopted a radically wrong method. Reading about what happened at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, one can observe the kind of approach adopted by many representatives there. The most difficult representative came from the part of the world from which I come. With due respect I will mention the name, Swami Vivekananda who eloquently upheld the essential unity of all religions. In doing so, he had to go through many important doctrines in the divergent religious traditions which are held sacred by each of those traditions. In my opinion, which stands to be corrected, it is this persuasion that probably led to the failure of that congress. If so, instead of asking the question, "What is the essence of the different religious traditions of the world," let us ask the question, "What has such and such religion done for mankind?" The consolation Jesus Christ has provided Warren Lewis is undoubtedly similar to the consolation Muhammad has offered Isma'il al Faruqi, and Buddha has offered David Kalupahana. There is at least one reason for us to be sensitive to another's religion,

to be considerate of another's point of view. This I hope is one way in which we can make the Global Congress a success.

Let me end my few remarks with a lighter note. I am superstitious enough to suggest that the Parliament of Religions failed because of the venue of its first meeting. Maybe we should be careful in selecting a venue for our first meeting of the Global Congress of the World's Religions. We should look for a place sanctified by the occurrence of religious miracles. Chicago certainly is not the place. Let me explain what I mean with a little anecdote. Conforming to the normal practice at all such meetings, the organizers of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago provided conducted tours of the city for the participants. Attending the congress was a lay Buddhist representing the country from which I come, Sri Lanka. His name was Ananda Dharmapali. In the course of such tours, the participants were taken to visit a modern meat canning factory. At this factory, the distinguished delegates were shown how cattle were herded into one end of the factory and cans of corned beef issued out at the other end. An enthusiastic tour guide asked the delegates, "Don't you think that this is a miracle?" Ananda Dharmapali thought of responding, "I do not see any miracle in entering cattle at one end of the machine and getting cans of corned beef from the other. On the contrary, I would consider it a miracle if cans of corned beef were inserted at one end and cattle produced from the other end." For the success of the Global Congress of the World's Religions, let us keep our eyes wide open for a sacred venue that has witnessed the occurrence of such miracles. Thank you.

*DR. LEWIS:* Our next speaker was to have been Ninian Smart, who is the GCWR President for the Agenda of the GCWR. As many of you who know Ninian have heard, he had an operation some weeks ago. He suffered a relapse and had to go back into the hospital. We are told he is at home again and is recovering nicely now and is out of danger. Standing in for Ninian is Dr. Mary Carman Rose, Professor of Philosophy at Goucher College in Baltimore. She greets the GCWR on behalf of the Christian faith.

MARY CARMAN ROSE: I have had such a long and difficult spiritual search that even now it makes me happy to have Warren say, "She's a Christian." But I very much share Joseph's feelings. I'm glad I'm not talking to a typical Christian gathering. I'm very active in Baltimore in many Christian communities. In all of them, I frequently get a cold shoulder because I'm far too ecumenical. I have found my spiritual home, but there's an aspect of "stranger at the gate" that does not get enough attention. I have been a stranger at the gate. As an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota I looked in on the Hindus who lived in Minneapolis. I looked in at the Buddhists. There were some Taoists. There were some gnostics. There were many groups. Every one of those groups was made up, primarily, of people who had found their home. They were good to me. They did take me in. They taught me. Many of them are still my friends. Before I knew the meaning, the Christian or the Jewish meaning, of, "I will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me," I learned it from a Taoist. Before I understood about impediments to Christian spiritual development, I knew about the seven Buddhist impediments to spiritual developments. Before I was even mature enough to be interested in the Judeo-Christian God or the Muslim God, I had learned from my Hindu friends there is one God and all men are His children. Warren may have been interested in this project for ten years. I've been interested for almost fifty. I always knew there was going to have to be a Global Congress. Where will it go? We don't know. I trust the creativity of the Tao, the creativity of the Way. I don't want to interfere with a creativity that I think all of us must see is much greater and wiser than we are. But Warren said I could speak for myself and I'm going to. I see that I *do* have a commitment. I am faithful. I must fight for the truth but I must never be offended—must never, never be offended—on personal grounds. I must pray every day, to try to be more loving, more self-giving. I must work. I must take this responsibility for the little things in my *life to try to bring about a purer humanism.*

DR. LEWIS: Our final speaker is Dr. Lois Lam'ya al Faruqi, Professor of Religion and Art at Temple University

in Philadelphia. She speaks for the Muslim world, and welcomes the Global Congress of World Religions. Dr. al Faruqi is the Chair of the Committee on Religion and the Arts of the GCWR.

*LOIS L. AL FARUQI:* Salaam aleykum—Ladies and Gentlemen: As a Muslim, I welcome the founding of the GCWR. I see it not simply as the inauguration of yet another body or institution of do-gooders who would promote the social, economic and emotional welfare of mankind. I see it as the beginning of a new period in which people from various religious traditions are to become aware of their common heritage as God's creatures and vice-regents on earth. In this new era, we are moved to collectively and cooperatively seek to fulfill His will for the whole of mankind. This movement toward a Global Congress is important and unique in that it is not one which shows tolerance of the various religious traditions for self-centered, strategic, or political reasons. On the other hand it is not contemptuously tolerant of the various traditions because it deems them harmless fantasies. Instead, the Global Congress workers have been sincerely trying to seek out and to gather together people of genuine religious commitment, people who are tolerant because of their deep respect for the various religious traditions, people who are concerned for the spread of that tolerance to all mankind. God's will relates favorably to all His creatures, rather than limiting His benefits to a particular segment of humanity. The goals of the GCWR are goals for which Muslims have been striving since the seventh century and for which they shall continue to strive until the end of time. These are goals which are part and parcel of our religious beliefs. Exemplification of this deep-rooted Muslim concern for interreligious cooperation and dialogue exist on both the ideational and the practical level. The ideational roots for this concern and involvement are found in the Holy Koran, the revealed scripture of the Muslim people. There God affirms that He has sent His message not only to the seventh century inhabitants of Arabia, but to earlier people as well. The Islamic message, therefore, came as a reaffirmation, not a rejection, of the earlier revelations to Abraham, Moses,

David and Jesus. In addition, Islam commanded of its adherents a respect for all humans as possessors of an innate religious capacity and an innate moral capacity which made all mankind a species higher than the rest of creation, even higher than the angels.

On the practical side, the relationship between Islam and the world's religious traditions is also found extending back to that formative period. In the year 632 a covenant was made in Madina between the prophet, Muhammad, the community of Muslims and the community of Jews. This covenant or constitution which was to inform all later instances of the Islamic state, sought to break the bond of the tribalism of that time, just as we today, by striving for the formation of the GWCR seek to break down those barriers of nation, race, color or sex, which divide us and set us in conflict and competition.

That seventh century covenant established the Islamic states as an over-arching institution, a world-order to protect and promote not ethnic groups or nation-states, but the constituent, religious communities. It was a federation of the Muslim and Jewish communities which granted to each protection from outside aggression, at the same time as it guaranteed freedom of religious beliefs and the right to order the lives of its adherents in accordance with those beliefs. Later a Christian, a Zoroastrian, a Buddhist, a Hindu and other religious communities came into contact with the expanding Islamic state and these communities were offered and provided the same protection and status. Given the religious imperative for interreligious involvement both on the ideational and the practical levels, we as Muslims feel proud and anxious to cooperate with people of other faiths in order to realize the goals espoused by the GCWR and, thereby, to move ever forward toward realizing God's will on earth.

*DR. LEWIS:* Next, we shall recite aloud together the preamble to our charter. The preamble is printed on the inside first page of the brochure which you have been given. Please understand that the preamble is not a creed, each word of which is supposed to be a statement of faith or dogma and would therefore be submitted to analytical

scrutiny. Quite to the contrary, it is merely a general statement of the intention of the Global Congress. As you read through it with us, if you find that you share a general agreement with the sentiments expressed in the preamble, and if you feel persuaded by what we are attempting to do, please know that we would warmly welcome you as full industrious members with us in bringing to pass a Global Congress. Leading us in the unison reading of the preamble is the Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, executive chairperson of the World Congress of Faiths in England, and a priest of the Church of England.

*MARCUS BRAYBROOKE:* Thank you, Warren. Friends, before I ask you to stand and read the preamble with me, I think we should have perhaps a moment of silence in which we can read it to ourselves and ponder its meaning, so when we read it together, it can be a time of dedication. As Warren said, this is not a creed, but an expression of our intentions. Then after the reading, we hope that those of you who wish to, will sign your name in the very beautiful book which lies open waiting for your signature. So we'll just have a moment of quiet before we read this together.

I invite those of you who would like to share in reading this preamble to stand and say it with me.

#### PREAMBLE

The flowing together of human energies  
in the life of our time  
inspires us religious people  
to unify our hearts, clarify our understanding,  
implement our compassion, and coordinate our  
action  
in the shared responsibility for well-being  
of the human family and the earth itself  
on which we live.

This task belongs to all of us  
as the history of our race  
increasingly becomes a common story,  
but it is particularly expected of those  
whose minds have been opened to spiritual  
enlightenment

and whose hearts are made tender  
for the fragile and the suffering.

We, therefore, today, November 30th 1980,  
sensing our religious responsibility,  
in the name of all we hold sacred  
constitute ourselves  
a global congress of the world's religions.

We undersign our names—  
both those who call on God and those  
who do not—  
and invite others of like persuasion  
to join with us and sign their names,  
betokening our intention to gather the  
world's religions  
into an ongoing congress  
where these high purposes  
shall be acknowledged, strengthened, and  
made effective.

*DR. LEWIS:* Please be seated. I'm going to ask at this point that our trustees and their advisers come forward and sign the book of the Congress. After they have done that, we will move the book out into the hall. It will be on a table there and we invite the rest of you to sign the book with the understanding that we'll be contacting you. In that way, we'll be able to clear the room so that the next scheduled event can be arranged here.

I want to remind you again that tomorrow morning at 9:00 we'll have the conference session of our Fourth Annual Conference Toward a Global Congress of the World's Religions. At that time you will have additional opportunity to sign the book.

## II REPORTS

*DR. WARREN LEWIS:* Good morning. There will be a coffee break later this morning. Perhaps at that time, those of you who have not yet signed the book of the Congress and would like to, could avail yourselves of that opportunity. I've been informed that some of you may have to leave before then, so we are now going to move the book of the Congress to the table in the back of the room. If you want to sign it before you leave, you'll have that opportunity.

On the table at the back of the room you'll find a variety of literature which you are invited to have free of charge in some cases, but there are two pieces that are for sale. The *Proceedings* of last year's Global Congress are there. Please help yourselves. In addition, copies of *World Faiths Insight* are available at \$2.00 per copy. This is the joint publication of the World Congress of Faiths, an English interreligious organization, and The Temple of Understanding, an American interfaith organization. This is the new series since the two journals have been united. The editors of both are with us. Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao was the editor of *Insight*. Marcus Braybrooke was the editor of *World Faiths*. Together they are the editors of *World Faiths Insight*.

Also for sale, for \$15.00, is this publication by Marcus Braybrooke which has just been released: *Inter-Faith Organizations: 1893 to 1979; An Historical Directory*, NY: Mellen Press, 1980. This is the only book of its kind covering the history of interreligious, interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Because of its usefulness in explaining the tradition

in which the Global Congress stands, we are only too happy to give this commercial on behalf of Marcus' book.

This morning we divide our activity in two. We shall hear first from Moise Adjangba, who is professor of international law at the University of Benin in Lome, Togo. He will briefly bring you up to date on the developments of the African Institute for the Study of Human Values. The African Institute and the Global Congress have made progress together. At every meeting of the Global Congress, we have given time to the African Institute to make its announcements and invite participation and support. We are happy to do that again.

Following Moise's talk and any discussion, we will hear from David Kalupahana, who is the Global Congress President for Communication. He will bring you up to date on what the trustees and their advisers have been doing in the past few days and indicate the immediate future directions of the Global Congress. Following his talk, we will again be open for discussion, for critique, and for comments. Following that there will be a coffee break. After the coffee break, we'll hear from Francis Clark. I'll introduce him at the appropriate time. So now, Moise Adjangba, Professor of International Law at the University of Benin, in Lome, Togo.

*A. MOISE ADJANGBA:* Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I will be very brief. This address was to be delivered by the President of the Institute, Professor Ohin. Unfortunately he had to leave early. He asked me to substitute for him and say a few words about the Institute. As you may know, the idea of this institute has been in the offing for the past two or three years. A number of things have been done here and in Africa by Professor Francis Botchway, whom you know very well, by Dr. Ohin and by the staff of the International Cultural Foundation and the Unification Church in America. Right now we have Mrs. Masooya, helping us in Lome. She came about two months ago. She is working with us to help us to prepare for the inauguration. As you know, the headquarters of the Institute will be based in Lome. Lome is on the west coast of Africa between Nigeria and Ghana. It has a frontier with the

Republic of Benin (formerly Dahomey).

There are two major factors which led to the choice of Lome as the headquarters. The first factor is political stability, racial tolerance and ethnic tolerance. Without these parameters, nothing positive can be achieved. There is also our search for dialogue and international cooperation. Lome is the location of many international conferences.

We hope that the inauguration will be held in the first part of February. We are in contact with the President of the Republic, who will be delivering the inaugural address. He is very enthusiastic about having this Institute in Lome. I think that he will do all he can, and his government will do all that it can, in order to make the stay enjoyable for those among you who will come. There is historical information about the Institute in the books of the Global Congress. Thank you.

(Editor's Note: See the Seoul meeting for a report of the inauguration of the Institute in August '81. It is reported in "A Newsletter of the GCWR" [Nov. 81], 3-4. A brochure is available with details of the program: The Institute..., Headquarters, P.O. Box 170, Legon, Ghana.)

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you, Moise. Now David Kalupahana will tell us about the work of the trustees and the immediate future plans of the Global Congress. Mr. President for Communications.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Good morning. I want to say a few words before I share with you what has happened in the last two days at the meetings of the board of trustees. I think it is right that I say a few words about how the board of trustees came into existence. I understand that there are a number of misunderstandings about some people not being able to join the board of trustees, people who are really enthusiastic about our activities. The first time, to my knowledge, that the idea of organizing a GCWR came up, was in 1975. If I remember correctly, it was at the ICUS meeting in Washington, D.C. I remember Warren Lewis mentioning this to me. He was very enthusiastic about our participation. I think he consulted many people at the time, but my feeling was that he did not have that much

support for the Congress. I was interested personally, but at the time I had some official responsibilities at the University of Hawaii. I do not know whether it was because I was a Buddhist that Warren Lewis consulted with me or because I was carrying that official responsibility. I was Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University. My department at that time had a very important role in holding conferences on Eastern Philosophy. Perhaps Warren wanted me to participate in this Global Congress in that capacity. Unfortunately, since it was a state university and I was an employee of the state university, I found that it was difficult for me to participate in that official capacity. I explained to Warren that as an individual I would certainly be willing to help him in whatever way he wanted me to help him. He came to Hawaii and we had long discussions with the faculty members there. At the 1977 meeting of the ICUS we had our first regular meeting of the Conference toward a Global Congress of the World's Religions. That was in San Francisco.

There were a large number of people attending the first meeting. All kinds of ideas were expressed about such a congress. Some ideas were very negative. Some were very positive. Warren had been in touch with numbers of the people who were participating in the ICUS. I don't know who agreed at that time or who ran away from the idea, fearing that this would be an attempt on the part of the Unification Church to have a hold on the religions of the world. When I met him in 1979 in New York on my way back from my sabbatical leave, I remember him telling me that he had representatives from different religious denominations, but there was no one from Buddhism. It was at that time I volunteered. In 1975, I said I would not be able to participate in an official capacity but as an individual I could. So Warren accepted my services.

Since the first meeting there were a lot of changes. Some people dropped out while some new people came in. This is still going on. This may give you an indication as to how the board of trustees has come into existence. It was not a pre-planned thing. The idea was brewing all the time. People are coming, people are going. All kinds of

things are happening. As I see it, this board of trustees has evolved after five years of discussion with all kinds of people. Some have volunteered their services while Warren asked others. We needed a committee to start this whole thing. People have been meeting in several places. The last meeting that we had was on the Hawaiian Island of Kauai. Some of the people who participated there are not members of the board of trustees now. Some have dropped out since then. We have brought some people into the board only the day before yesterday when we met for the last time here.

What we need to keep in mind is that we need to have a small group to work with. Mr. David S.C. Kim, President of the Unification Theological Seminary, who has been helping us during the last couple of years, also mentioned this idea. We need to have a small group to work with or it will be unwieldy. We have not decided how far we are going to expand this committee. The by-laws which we adopted in Kauai this past summer say that we may have up to twenty-one members on the board. Right now we have only eleven members. The people who are meeting regularly to discuss this matter have differences of opinion as to whether we should have a larger board or a smaller board. So that is how the board has come to be. It is not important, really, whether you are on the board or not. We will be having regular meetings and we will be consulting with you in all our activities. But since we need a core group to plan and arrange the meetings, we have this entity.

We have a problem which we have been discussing. The main problem is how do we go about getting representation from different religious groups, because we are here meeting as a GCWR. We want to have at least the major religious traditions represented here. That's only one of the concerns.

We need to have representation from regions. We need to have people from Australia, Asia, Europe, Africa, South America and North America. We also need representation from both sexes.

We need representation from different professions like academicians, religious leaders, lay people. We need people who are willing to work. We have had difficulties finding

representatives to fit in with these requirements. We have eleven members now. We have spaces for ten more. We do not want to fill them immediately because we want to fill them from areas which are not represented on the board.

We do not have a woman member, so that is something that we must consider. At the last meeting in Kauai, we selected three presidents for three different kinds of activities. Ninian Smart will be the President for Agenda. Sri Radhakrishna, an activist involved in the Gandhi Peace Foundation, was appropriately selected to be the President for Action. I was asked to take care of communicating things. I don't know what that really means. At our recent meetings we selected a secretary of the board of trustees. Professor Archie Bahm will be serving as secretary. Professor al Faruqi was favored to be the treasurer of the board. We have a few committees as well. Dr. William Jones, Archie Bahm and Francis Clark are going to help Ninian Smart in preparing the agenda for future meetings of the Global Congress. We have a committee helping Professor al Faruqi with the finances: Gordon Melton, Jan Knappert, and Warren Lewis.

We have been discussing at length what we might do for future meetings of the Global Congress. It is understood that the Unification Church is not going to provide all the funds for us. The Global Congress is going to be an independent organization. Of course we can't go ahead at this stage without any funds. The Unification Theological Seminary, headed by Mr. David Kim, who has been constantly helping us with our meetings, hosting us wherever we went, and providing us with all the comforts that we needed, has agreed to provide limited funds which can be used for fundraising. There are expenses involved in getting the literature that we need for fundraising, the printing of the brochures, printing of the other documents that we will be carrying with us. At this stage, I cannot say where we will end up or how we will end up, but we are going to make a determined effort to go around the world and drum up support, and collect money for future activities.

This important task was assigned to several committees

on a regional basis. We have a committee for South Asia which will probably include Southeast Asia. The people selected for this committee are from the board of trustees and also includes friends who are living in that part of the world. Sri Radhakrishna, who is already a member of this board of trustees, will be in charge of fundraising activities in India. Padmasiri de Silva will be our anchor man in Sri Lanka. Professor Archie Bahm and myself will be helping those two whenever we can, going around fundraising. We do not have money at this stage for the four of us to meet in that part of the world but we are doing whatever we can as individuals. I am hoping to get a research grant to go to India during the summer. I agreed to use part of my time after I finish my research project, to meet with people to see whether we can get the support of religious leaders, academicians, and others from that area.

We have a small committee concerned with the Far East. Professor Zwi Werblowsky, Professor Al Bloom, and Professor James Koderer are involved in this.

We have a committee helping us with fundraising in the Middle East. This committee is headed by Professor al Faruqi. Francis Botchway, Jan Knappert, and Matiur Rahman are on that committee. You have already been given a brief description of our concerns in Africa. Francis Botchway and Kurt Johnson are involved there on the part of the Global Congress.

These are the committees we have and some of what we plan to do during the next year or so. Thank you.

*DR. LEWIS:* There is also a European committee. Francis Clark is more or less in charge of that committee along with Jan Knappert, Marcus Braybrooke, Ninian Smart, and I believe, Myrtle Langley. These regional committees exist not only for fundraising, but almost more importantly, as the group which will be responsible for the organization of the regional consultations that we plan between now and our target date for the first plenary gathering of the Global Congress, 1983. It is our design to hold four or five such regional consultations in various quarters of the earth for the specific purpose of inviting the

religions of the world to sit with us there and tell us what the agenda for the Global Congress should be, rather than our telling them.

Most likely our first regional consultation will take place in Lome at the inauguration of the African Institute. We hope to be able to conduct our first regional consultation with the religions of Africa. At that time, we will address ourselves specifically to the question, "What do you, the religions of Africa, say to us, the Global Congress, should be the agenda, should be the concerns, should be the issues? How shall we structure the Congress? To what shall we address ourselves in our first plenary meeting in 1983?" Perhaps there will be another consultation sometime during the coming calendar year. If all goes well, we at least hope to have a consultation in Seoul, more or less at the time of the ICUS.

*JOHN MEAGHER:* I'm John Meagher, University of Toronto. In this admirable enterprise, there is one thing that seems to be missing. It is not surprising because it's never been done before. Even on a small scale between person and person I think it's very rare. After speaking to Francis Clark yesterday, I'm truly persuaded that this is not something that the Global Congress can do right away. It is something that I think should be a long-range objective. It is this: If we are as serious as we want to be, and if we indeed respect and accept one another as much as we wish to do then part of the realization must be that we are very unfinished and foolish people. The kind of friendship which the Global Congress should envision seems to me to be a completely open one. I'm not talking about anything that would happen right away. This is for the long run. We should be free to confess to one another our biases and foolish perceptions of one another, some of which will have validity and some of which are merely conceptions on which we can be corrected. We should be open to receive in turn from the others who respond in kind, confessions of their conceptions, which will have validity or be useful corrections. It's a very difficult process. It is difficult between person and person. Between religion and religion, it is an almost insurmountable difficulty. But it is something that

is profoundly worth doing. It has never been seriously attempted in the history of the world. I don't happen to know if other agencies would have a chance to do it. It can't be done right away, but I would be, for myself, deeply appreciative if this could be on our long range agenda.

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you, John. Please, I'll not need to recognize you; everyone can speak and say anything you choose to say.

*GORDON MELTON:* I study American Religion. I'd like to speak to the issue of representatives speaking out of a tradition. I feel very uncomfortable as a Christian, being a representative of Christianity. I'm a United Methodist. I come from the Southern branch of the Church, and from the radically fundamentalist branch of my conference. I feel very uncomfortable even speaking for Methodism because there's a great diversity in the American Methodist camp. I know that most of them would disagree with anything I say. I feel uncomfortable, for example, participating in something where an Anglican or Catholic is the representative of Christianity. Anglicans and Catholics don't speak for radical free church people. The diversity is quite strong within Christianity. It goes from Christian Science to free church Mennonites to Anglicans to Roman Catholics to Lutherans. You have a range that is as wide as world religion. They just happen to be oriented around the same symbol. Perhaps we need to widen our thinking and not begin by classifying people into the great religious traditions. I remember a comment that was made to me by a Buddhist from Southeast Asia one time. I asked him to talk to me and tell me what his opinion of Zen Buddhism was. He said, "Oh, you mean Japanese Zen." He meant, the Zens were not Buddhists. We need to broaden ourselves. We have within the United States at least 1500 different religions. Within Africa south of the Sahara there are 5,000 different brands of Christianity. Within India no one has even begun to count how many different groups there are. There is a wide range of opinion and lack of consistency on anything in these groups. The radical pluralism of religion takes us far beyond the simple terms of Hindus,

Jews, Christians, Buddhists, and those rather set traditional categories.

*HAMID ZAHEDI:* My name is Hamid Zahedi. I am from the University of Southern California. I have a few concerns. Is the Global Congress a legal entity? What is, and where is, the constitution? Another concern is about the board of trustees being of different religions and faiths, at least the main religions, and regions and countries or both.

The third question is whether the congress is a permanent organization, which of course is related to the first question, or is it a temporary organization? If it is a permanent organization, how is the executive constituted? Of course, if there were a constitution right now, we would not have this question. Again, a legal entity has to have an administrative structure. What is the function of the different parts of the administrative structure of the Congress? What is the relationship between trustees and the committees which are going to be established in different regions? There is one more thing which I think is of prime importance. I would like to suggest that the Congress be related to a permanent organization. That organization can organize different committees in different parts of the world. People will know which body is communicating and where they can find answers. Thank you.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* I want to repeat something about the philosophy that is involved which I tried to express earlier. As I see the philosophy, the Congress will go on growing for a while until it evolves into something. At this time I'm not quite sure whether we can predict with 100% certainty what this is going to be. I can give an example of one of the problems which we faced in organization. You ask about the executive committee. We had a lot of trouble deciding how the executive committee should be formed. The simple reason for that is that here is a group of people coming from all parts of the world. If they wanted to meet, there are a lot of expenses involved. People have to be brought not only from Hawaii, but also from India, Sri

Lanka, Europe, Africa. So we found that it was difficult to specify an executive committee. However, legally the executive committee has to meet at least once a year. Who is going to provide the funds to bring all these people from different parts of the world whenever you want to have an executive committee meeting? We decided, therefore, to locate the executive committee as close to one another as possible. After a lot of consultation we decided to have one of the presidents available at the meeting. In addition either the secretary or the treasurer should be available for the meeting, as well as one board member. It is going to be difficult to function at this stage because we are without funds. It is a growing thing. It is not finalized yet. The board of trustees is not yet completed either. That is really the way you have to look at it at this stage. That is why I said it is a legal entity but it is not finalized.

*DR. LEWIS:* I'll just say a word or two more to Dr. Zahidi's questions. I heard six distinct questions in what he had to say:

1. Where is the constitution if it is a congress in any familiar sense of the word *congress*? In our little brochure which I'm sure you've seen there's a title, "Notes for the charter." We're in the process now of drafting a charter. That "Notes for the charter" was more or less an infusion of sentiment on the part of some of us at the Kauai meeting last August. Now we hope to elaborate upon the idea and design a charter that will make good sense to inquirers such as yourself.
2. To whom do we relate? Faiths, countries, religions, regions. We are a Congress of the World's Religions, all of them if possible. Of course, that's saying quite a bit, isn't it? Perhaps we should say, "All of them who will attend." It is our desire to bring to the same forum, to the same table, to the same place of conversation, representatives, people who stand in the traditions of as many of the world's religions as are willing to come and be with us. That's what the Global Congress shall be about.
3. Is it a permanent or temporary organization? God willing, it shall be a permanent organization, and a

permanent activity and an ongoing activity. One does not foresee that the issues will be quickly resolved or that new issues will not continually arise. If we are to be that public forum where issues can be debated and thought about and work can be done toward resolution of them, then it will be, an ongoing activity. As the board of trustees develops and as we move towards our first plenary session, we probably will have to be more specific about just how things do work. At the moment we are content with our president, our treasurer, our secretary. The legal body which does exist is the board of trustees. These are the individuals who bear the responsibility for carrying the ball, and hopefully they will make a touchdown.

4. What is the function of the administrative parts to the whole?
5. How do the committees relate? Well, they relate in a very personal way. Whenever someone comes forward and says, "Look, I've got some friends in Japan and if you're going to Seoul next year maybe I could get in touch with some of my friends in Japan," and we say, "Oh good, please do that." That's how it works.
6. If the congress is to be a permanent ongoing activity, then your sixth and final question will answer itself. There will be an organization which one can comfortably relate to. But hopefully—this is my hope at any rate—the kind of free wheeling, personal, relaxed way that it has begun, that spirit can stay with us and permeate everything we do lest we become too official and too officious. Archie, our secretary, must make a correction at this point.

*ARCHIE BAHM:* I think the questions can be answered a little more definitely. My understanding is that persons who have been selected as trustees thus far are already involved in interreligious concern through their activities. We are not representing merely one religion or one religious tradition even though some of the members do still represent a particular religion more than some of the others. But the idea of a person being already, and perhaps for some time involved in interreligious activities was one

of the qualifications for a person being selected as a trustee. I think that's important.

There was a request for a charter and you seem to give the idea that we don't have one. We have one. It is called the By-Laws, rather than a charter—but that is a technical distinction. We have been engaged in the last two or three days in revising those By-Laws to remove apparent contradictions or inadequacies. If anyone wants to see that set of By-Laws, they're available. That's more definite than anything that we've said here thus far.

Ideally, we would go on forever. However, every trustee has a limited term, according to the by-laws. Each trustee is appointed for three years only with the possibility of a second three year term. He must be off the board for at least three years before he can serve again. This is something very definite that has not been mentioned thus far.

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you. We have elected a good secretary! Next question.

*SPEAKER:* I understand that you want to unite all these religious traditions. Unity is in the air. We have the United Nations, and various united societies. It is important that we be united too. Of course, we already have the World Council of Churches, an organization which unites many traditions. The Roman Catholic Church is presently involved in SODEPAX (The Roman Catholic Committee on Society, Development and Peace). I was thinking it would be a good thing to get in touch with these organizations. It would be a good thing to unite with those who are already united.

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you, Monsignor. That was very well said. This is the way we hope that our conferences work. When the Monsignor stands up and speaks thus, this is an indication to me that we can go to him and ask for help to unite with those societies that are already united. I'm sure Francis Clark, who is a trustee and a Roman Catholic, will be more than happy to speak with you about it following the meeting.

*KURT JOHNSON:* I'm Dr. Kurt Johnson. The Global Congress is a separate entity. The Unification Church is an entity. As Warren made clear the position of the Unification Church is that it is not desirable from anyone's point of view that the Global Congress be totally supported by the Unification Movement. That's been clear for a long time. One thing that may be less clear to people here is that, contrary to the perception that the Unification Church is a hierarchical and monolithic structure, it is not. You've never seen radical pluralism until you've been in the Unification Movement. The diversity of opinion can go as far as you can imagine, and the structures are equally decentralized. Now, because of this, and because the interest of the Global Congress is a world interest, there has never been a decision within the Unification Movement of how it will relate to or who will represent the interest of the movement to the Global Congress. What *has* been established is what is called the liaison committee. That includes myself as a representative of the American Unification Church, and the Director of Ecumenical Affairs of the national church. There's a representative of the Unification Theological Seminary on that committee. There's a representative from the Unification Church who works with the other ecumenical efforts of the movement. Warren serves in his capacity as a Seminary professor and secretary to the trustees. We act as an intermediary between the Congress and the pluralism of authoritative and funding elements within the movement itself. This is the type of relationship that goes on. There is the Congress, and there is the Unification Movement. We are always in the situation of constantly feeling out what are the legitimate and authentic directions of the Congress itself. There are no Unification Church people in any official capacity within the Congress. In our capacity, the liaison committee goes to any leader or any funding agency within the Unification Movement whom we think, because of their particular point of view, or world view, may be more likely to support the Global Congress than some other person or unit. I just wanted to make sure you know how fluid and dynamic that situation is. My hope would be that after this

conference, the movement itself will do its homework and centralize its relationship to the Congress. Right now, that does not exist and causes some difficulty not only for the Congress but also for us as a liaison committee.

*DR. LEWIS:* I might just add before Dr. Gulek speaks, that there is an unwritten rule in the by-laws—and by unwritten I mean exactly that—that there are no Unificationist members on the board of trustees. I am not a Unification Church member and I have no vote in the trustees. Obviously, those of us who are working this closely to the Unificationists and to the Rev. Moon do not share the point of view that has been so generously expressed, especially in American and other media, that the Unificationists are the terrible, terrible people that they're supposed to be. At the same time, we recognize that this criticism of Unification could get the Global Congress into considerable difficulty. Therefore, we are doing everything we can to make it perfectly clear that the Global Congress is not a front organization for the Unification Movement. The Unification people do not in any way control the decisions, the activities, the policy of the Global Congress trustees or the Global Congress of the World's Religions, itself. Really, we're all on both sides of that issue, quite pleased with the results. The Unificationists are very pleased that they are fully supporting something that is fully independent of themselves. They've accomplished something in their own eyes. We are delighted that they are content to be a patron of the Global Congress without attempting control. For the record I would like to say to you that we've been at it now for about five years and I have yet to see Mr. David Kim or any of the other Unificationists with which I work attempt any kind of sneaky, underhanded move to control the Global Congress. That simply is not their interest. They are our generous, open-hearted supporters and that's that. If anyone wants to ask you about it, you can tell them that in all good conscience. Dr. Gulek, please come, we'll have one or two other questions and then we'll take a coffee break.

*DR. KASIM GULEK:* I would like to support the idea of

the Roman Catholic father who just spoke. The World Council of Churches does not represent Catholics, but it does include Greek Orthodox. It is not only one sect. It is a whole group. If there are other organizations in other religions similar to that, we should be in contact with them. On the relationship of the Global Congress and the Unification Church I do not think there is any contradiction or conflict. On the contrary, both work toward an end. We respect the religion of everyone. They are all roads that lead to God. It is perfectly all right to keep the religion into which you were born. But let us be in touch. Let us talk to one another and let us create an atmosphere of unison among all those who believe in God. This is the essence. We do not have to stress the differences. Let's leave those aside. But there is one important aspect on which we all unite—belief in God and striving to grow in the Almighty. Thank you.

*RICHARD QUEBEDEAUX:* My name is Richard Quebedeaux and I'm from Berkeley, California. This is my first time at a meeting of Global Congress so what I have to say may have already been said many times, but let me take that risk. I'd like to know whether the Global Congress, when it gets sufficient funds, plans to establish a fulltime executive staff. My experience with consulting work in various religious organizations is that without such an entity they just do not go anywhere. Secondly, is it the intention to raise funds for endowments? Are we talking about a permanent organization, or is it simply to raise funds for projects year after year after year? If it is to raise funds for endowments, which I think is a wise thing to do, I would like to make a suggestion with respect to the church in America, particularly the Christian Church, and particularly that group of Christian churches and leaders in this country that have a lot of money. That group, which we generally call the evangelicals, includes the Billy Graham association, the television evangelists, and others. They have a lot of money and they spend a lot of money. Unfortunately, until very recently, the idea of doing anything with even non-evangelical Christians, or certainly with world religions, would have been anathema to them.

For a variety of reasons, that is changing. I think that the Global Congress should be aware that most people are interested in what you can do for them, not what they can do for you. I would say that some creative thinking needs to go into this. You might even consider hiring some people who are close to the evangelical community as development consultants. Begin talking to these leaders as to how participation in the Global Congress could help them. This could help avoid the fear that they might lose their own identity, their own interests and perspectives. In the world, there are at least two kinds of religious people. There are the dialogical types. There are the conversionist types. The evangelicals in this country want to make other people Christians. This is something of a road block. But I have found that just in bringing evangelicals to meet Unificationists, and most evangelicals do not believe that Unificationists are Christians, that with this sort of first encounter, when they really see the human side of other people and other religions, they start re-thinking. So I would simply like to share this. I hope that you will try some of these organizations that you would think are the last people in the world who would give money or support. I was a World Council of Churches scholar at Oxford. My experience with the World Council of Churches, is that when it really comes down to money, I can get more money from conservative people, much easier. I think we need to go to all the different groups. But I would like to ask the question whether endowment is sought and whether there is going to be not just a volunteer executive committee but an office with full-time staff?

*DR. LEWIS:* Archie, would you like to respond to that?

*ARCHIE BAHM:* I'd like to recommend that we grab him as a volunteer and appoint him as chairman of the committee for the American fundraising program.

*DR. LEWIS:* All in favor say "aye!" In answer to your two questions, in order, yes and yes. We will have to establish some kind of a permanent, visible office to handle the mailing and the rest of it. It's clear that that will have to be done. Will a part of our funds be used to endow the

Global Congress? I think we have more or less agreed that that is clearly the thing to do. There's something distasteful about having to go around hat in hand every time you want to do something. If an appropriate amount of the funds were appropriately and wisely invested, over a period of many years a rich endowment could be built for the Global Congress and its activities. When one wants to bring people together who are not wealthy, and the money has to be forthcoming from somewhere, one just cannot expect that perhaps someone from an underdeveloped country can pay \$2,000 to fly to the other side of the globe to participate in a two or three day conference. We recognize that and we intend to do something about it. That is why we have established our fundraising committee. We are going to do a lot of hard work thinking it through, and Richard, welcome to the committee!

*KHURSHID AHMAD:* I am Professor Khurshid Ahmad of Pakistan. I think we have a number of organizational questions. I would like to make two suggestions, more about our approach and attitude, and less about organization. First, what type of people should we be interested in? There are many people who talk about religion without necessarily belonging to a religion. There are many academicians, intellectuals who deal with world religions, world faiths and what not. I think if it is going to make some real impact and make a unique contribution, the Global Congress should keep this in mind. We should be a body of those who actually belong to religion, who have some commitments, who regard themselves as being people of a tradition, who want to live by that tradition. Karl Marx talked about religion. You do not become a part of religion merely by talking about religion. I do not think the Global Congress should consist of people who are just interested in religion as outsiders. It should consist of those who belong to a religious tradition. These are the ones who should meet in this project to see how they can contribute one, toward understanding each other better; two, to finding out where they can cooperate with each other in the achievement of their common objectives and for solving common problems. The other point that I want to make is

that perhaps we can make a unique contribution if instead of just extending our biases, we try to adopt a new approach. Let us try to see each religion and each religious tradition in the light of the beliefs of those who belong to it.

Instead of talking about Islam, finding out what the so-called experts on Islam have been telling us all along during the last 300 years, let us try to understand Islam as Muslims believe, as Muslims practice it. Let's try to understand Christianity as Christians believe it, Buddhism as Buddhists believe it, Hinduism as Hindus believe it, and not as the academics, or the so-called experts have been telling us all these years. Now this may be a very unique approach but perhaps the difference between the dialogical approach and intellectualizing approach will become meaningful if we have dialogue of this type. I will submit that we need a really fresh approach to religion. Instead of talking about each other, let us talk to each other about ourselves, share with others our traditions, our faith as we believe in it, as we understand it.

In this spirit, I will listen to my Christian brethren, hear what they stand for, and that is how my own biases, my own ignorance will be automatically reduced. That is how this Global Congress will really be a Congress of the world's religions. Let us start sharing in a different way, that of being involved, getting more involved and sharing with others about our own faith. This would be a really different approach from the approach of simply dealing with different religious traditions. That is how we can make a unique contribution and can really grow into a real Global Congress of the World's Religions.

*CHUNG YING CHENG:* My name is Chung Ying Cheng. I am very much impressed with the elegant community of this organization. I am concerned with the substantial development of the organization. It is said that by your fruits you will become known, so what I think would be most important is planning for the future. Now here I think there are certain problems that I would like to point out for your consideration for a better future for the development of the Congress. First of all, I think there is the problem of representation which we have talked about. It is apparent

that we could organize the congress in terms of regions and major faiths. Of course here is the underlying problem of east/west dialogues or concord. I heard people saying that you have to believe in God first. The term *God* had been used in several ways. Here it must be considered in the most broad way. In the eastern religions or religious practice, there are other terms being used. I would say we should look into the broadest definition of religion with enough open-mindedness to encompass all. In that regard, I would say the eastern traditions of Confucianism and Taoism, both of them born in China, also have to be taken into account.

For the organization of this congress, I feel a planning committee has to be set up for the conference in 1983. I don't know what has been planned for that conference, but it is clear that we have to carefully search for right topics to make communication possible. It is not too early to think about it. In order to implement what would be the best form of communication, I would suggest that the Congress set up committees like outreach committees, committees which would relate to other groups.

I believe that philosophy or philosophy of religion should play an important part in the Congress. Many of you, including my colleague, Professor Kalupahana, are philosophers. We must recognize the importance of philosophy of religion. We should have philosophers so that we can become more effective in our communications. I think we should develop a more mature concept of what our Congress will become. I would like to suggest that perhaps in the words of Buddhism, we would like to have this Congress as one where harmony prevails. Thank you.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Just one brief comment about some of the things which were said earlier. I do not think it is right on our part to start with definitions of religion. I just received this note saying the first agenda of the GCWR "includes being devotedly religious without necessarily having to believe in God." I agree. You may remember the preamble that we read yesterday before signing this book. The board of trustees and the advisers and participants in

the Kauai conference spent fourteen hours just trying to put together this little statement of that brochure. I think it was finally on the advice of my friend, brother Francis Clark, that we put in this sentence. "We undersign our names—both those who call on God and those who do not—and invite others of like persuasion to join with us and sign their names." So at this stage we need not bother about our definitions. We certainly have different persuasions, we are from different religious beliefs. We are not going to equate one with the other. We are going to keep all those things open and see what happens in the future. Let it bloom like a lotus and the unity can come. Thank you.

*MOHAMMED FADHEL JAMALI:* I am Professor Jamali, University of Tunis. I am a Muslim. I have lived as such from my youth till today. My wife is a devout Christian. I am a devout Muslim. We have lived for fifty years together, and we have lived in peace (applause). I would like to make two points about this Congress. I myself belong to several organizations, for example, The World Conference on Religion and Peace. I was on the board of that organization. There are Councils of Churches. There are many organizations. Now where does this Global Congress stand? Is it going to be the meeting place of all those organizations or is it going to be of individuals, individuals from all religions, irrespective of their persuasions or organizations? In other words, is there going to be a common denominator for these organizations? Is it going to be a uniting force for those organizations? My next point is functioning. Is it going to be an educational institution to help us understand each other's point of view, learn from each other, what each has to share, and enlighten us on other people's religions and attitudes? Or is it going to go further and try to resolve interfaith conflicts? Where does it stand vis a vis human rights? You have to make a charter which guarantees religious freedom for all the people of the world. These are practical things on which I'm not very clear. I would be very grateful for any clarification.

*ARCHIE BAHM:* My understanding of the major part of the purpose of the regional meetings that are planned in

the next one, two or three years, is to ask people to answer that question. The group in charge of planning will not start off with their own ideas which may not work, but will gather information from each region with regard to what the Global Congress deals with. It's ambiguous at this point partly because there's a search for answers on the part of people in each of the regions. There may be different answers.

*DR. LEWIS:* What you had to say, Dr. Jamali, moved me to think that we ought to invite you and Mrs. Jamali to lead a section at the first plenary meeting of the Global Congress on how to have a successful interreligious marriage. That's a serious problem for a good number of people. If you've been doing it successfully for fifty years, you have a good track record. That's a whole new dimension.

You asked two questions that I heard. We have specifically said to ourselves and say to you that we want to relate to individuals in all of the religions. We also want to relate to all religions that are organized in such a way as to send official representatives. We are interested in individuals and we are interested in organized religions. In addition to that we also very much want to relate to those organizations which are neither simply individuals nor are they the religions, the faiths, but are rather bodies of interest that have been organized for the specific purpose of facilitating interreligious dialogue, like the World Congress of Faiths in England, like the Temple of Understanding, like some of the Muslim organizations, like the World Conference for Religion and Peace, the WCRP. We very much want to reach out to these institutions and work with them and through them and let them be with us so that the Global Congress of the World's Religions will work with as many individuals, religions and groups as are willing to work with us.

The second question was whether or not we intend to be educational only. No. With you we agree that if the Global Congress is to be anything more than just another conference it has to go to work on these areas of conflict. I might just say that perhaps this is as good a time to begin

as any. I think my wife would like to make a proposal and we'll let her make that proposal. Judy Reel.

*JUDY REEL:* You may be aware that we've had difficulty with the hotel management regarding the dietary needs of our Jewish, Muslim, and vegetarian friends. I was not raised with any kind of religious dietary restrictions. I was raised with other kinds of religious restrictions. Yet I certainly respect my friends' convictions regarding their instructions. I was very disturbed this morning when a Muslim friend sat down at our table and in our attempt to get a non-pork meal for him, the waitress actually refused to do anything for him. I propose that we as the GCWR write a letter to people running the ICUS, to the hotel management, and to anyone else to whom it would be appropriate, protesting this and suggesting that they respect religious traditions which may be different from their own.

*DR. LEWIS:* The issues of the vegetarian options have been added, not only for people who are restricted to vegetarian diets religiously, but for people who for health reasons have chosen a vegetarian diet. So those elements should be added to the list as well. Is there anyone who would strongly *oppose* the idea of our sending such a letter to the administration, to the ICUS and to the hotel in the name of the GCWR. Mr. Sonneborn.

*DR. JOHN ANDREW SONNEBORN:* I suggest that our concern over the dietary situation is very appropriate. It falls into religious matters. The banquet is being served by the ICUS. It is appropriate to address our remarks to them and not directly to the hotel. The ICUS will be able to report this to the hotel. It will also stimulate the ICUS' future hotel selection.

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you. Would anyone else like to make a comment, or in any way amend what we're doing, or suggest some alternative. Do I take it then we are generally of one mind that it would be appropriate to do something along these lines? We'll draft a letter and have it available at lunch where you may read it, or perhaps

where we can read it aloud, and then if any amendments need to be made on it at that point you can propose the amendments.

We come now to the address by Dr. Francis Clark, a trustee of the GCWR. For a good number of years Dr. Clark was a professor at the Gregorian University in Rome. He is a Christian theologian. At present he is a Reader in Religion at the Open University at Milton Keynes in England. This is the largest university in England. We are delighted that he will speak to us today on the general topic of "The Global Congress of the World's Religions—A Hope for Mankind." Francis.

III  
THE GLOBAL CONGRESS  
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS—  
A HOPE FOR MANKIND

by Dr. Francis Clark

It is written in the Holy *Qur'an*:

For those who believe  
And work righteousness  
There is blessedness  
And a beautiful bourne  
Of final return.

(Surah 13.29)

Each of us, in our different ways, may make this text our own. The Global Congress of the World's Religions is a meeting of those who believe, of those who hear a command to work righteousness, of those who feel or seek blessing, of those who look to a yet unrealized goal and fulfillment as the ultimate meaning of human life. Because we can all acknowledge there a description not only of ourselves but of those who stand with us at this place of meeting, there is a daring hope in our hearts. We dare to hope that from these small beginnings there may grow a fellowship of believers and of religions which will spread around the globe and embrace the whole of mankind.

We have come here for the inauguration of the Global Congress of the World's Religions. In its Latin origin, the word *inaugurate* does not mean merely "to make a formal

beginning"; etymologically it means to make omens concerning what is to be begun. As we stand here at the gateway of our great hope, it is permissible, perhaps even advisable, to look at the omens—that is, to offer some kind of prognostication of the dangers, opportunities and eventual achievements that may lie ahead.

I have said that ours is a daring hope. To many people it must seem not merely daring but fond and foolish. Let us look squarely at some of the chief reasons why many would see our hope as foredoomed to disappointment.

World history shows how intractable are the religious divisions of mankind, how difficult it is to pierce the fog of mutual incomprehension, how futile have been the efforts of those who have at various times attempted to raise a banner of worldwide religious fellowship. There are the impacted barriers of nationality, of language, of race, of culture. There is the long sad story of man's inhumanity to man even in the name of religion. There is the bitter legacy of rivalry, of suspicion, of resentment—yes, even of hatred—between religions and religious people. There are the even stronger obstacles raised by the sincere and impassioned loyalty of men to their own creed; there are the hallowed codes of piety, conduct and ways of worship that, over long centuries, have served to stamp each religion as separate and self-enclosed. And there are the deeply held doctrinal beliefs which, in different ways, give a higher sanction to the religious apartness and pluralism of mankind.

Furthermore, even if we can hope that in this age, at this critical juncture of human destiny, it is at last possible to loosen the shackles left by the sad history of religious antagonism in the past, is it not delusion and *hubris* on our part to imagine that we, this little group who have set ourselves to this task, can bring about the global change of heart which is needed if this ideal is to become reality? We are a small band of individuals, brought together by a seemingly random combination of circumstances. We know our weakness, our doubts, our limits of vision and capacity. We are not saints, or gurus or sages. We are not religious leaders commanding the loyalty and devotion of the

multitudes. We are not accredited representatives of the organized religions, churches and sects. How then can we claim to speak for anyone but ourselves? By what right do we presume to summon into being a global congress of the world's religions?

When we go out to ask others to join us, when around the world they begin to take note of our appeal, will they not ask for our credentials, and judge them as insufficient—or worse? Those who probe further will ask whence the first impulse for this movement came. There will be those who object that it came from a suspect source. They will form sinister surmises about our motivation, aims and activities. If our enterprise is to make progress and succeed, it can only be by winning over the hearts of men and women of good will, by persuading them to approve what we are doing and to join with us. For this there must be mutual frankness, respect and trust. Religious leaders and those who are influential in guiding religious opinion will soon become aware of the rumours and criticisms that will inevitably arise. They will prudently withhold support from a venture which is assailed as dubious in its origins and propagandist in its intent.

In an atmosphere clouded not only by suspicion and innuendo but also by conscientious misgivings of good people about the source and bearing of our design, how can we expect that our efforts can achieve any significant success? If the GCWR cannot attract the sympathetic interest and participation of those who lead and influence the main corporate religions of the world, if therefore it cannot effectively become a forum for believing humanity, it will not be able to speak for the masses of believers everywhere: it will belie its name, for it will not be a global congress of the world's religions. It will be branded as a failure; it will be dismissed as an unrepresentative group of individuals; or, more harshly, derided as a coterie of religious eccentrics.

All these obstacles are surely daunting enough—historical, doctrinal, devotional, psychological obstacles. Yet there are also the daunting obstacles in the organizational and practical sphere. For the Global Congress to realize

its objectives there will be required a planning operation of ever-increasing magnitude and complexity. There will have to be an outpouring of energy, or resources, of skills, of dedicated and unremitting staff work. Moreover, those who must co-ordinate these plans and see them through must possess in good measure the quality which Aristotle called *megalopsychia*, or greatness of soul. The challenge and the needs call for no ordinary degree of determination. "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying: 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'" *Luke 14.28-30*.

Or even if the enterprise does not fail outright, it may still not succeed. We must remember that we are not the first who have trodden this path. Many men and women of good will have been fired by the same ideal of bringing the religions of mankind into amity and concert, have launched movements and founded institutions to bring the vision to reality. Although they have done much that was useful and noble, and some of their associations are still worthily in existence, none has succeeded in achieving the great design. Their impact on the world and on the religions of mankind has been, relatively speaking, very small. What reasons have we for confidence that this new venture will go further than those others?

### THE AIMS AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE GCWR

There, then, are the main obstacles in our path, formidable enough to daunt even stout hearts. That you are not daunted is shown by your presence here. All those of us who set our hands to this undertaking show by doing so that we do not regard those obstacles as insuperable, that the hope that is in us is not blind or baseless.

We do not regard as merely utopian the vision of a plenary gathering of the world's religions, of a forum in which believing men and women from the whole Earth may come together "in mutual respect and common concern." It was once considered merely utopian to aspire

to bring the nations of the world into congress to consult together on the temporal and material concerns of humanity. Yet that aspiration has been realized to an astonishing extent in this latest century of mankind's long history. Surely a still greater degree of mutual understanding and cooperation should be possible among those who are concerned not only for the temporal and material, but also for the religious and spiritual welfare of mankind.

This is the age not only of multinational companies, of international agencies and intercontinental ballistic missiles, but also of global concern for the human family and its imperiled future. There is, for the first time in history, a truly universal sense of co-responsibility for the whole of our one race and for the environment which is our shared home. The religious perspective embraces all this in a wider vision. If the old religious antagonisms and apartness made a global congress of the world's religions impossible in the past, surely the new needs and opportunities make it possible in this age.

For indeed it is the religious apartness of mankind that we seek to challenge, not its religious pluralism. We must be insistent that what we seek is not a dilution of all religions into a neutral brew in which each loses what is distinctive to it; nor a higher synthesis which would attempt to distill from the best elements of all religions a new quintessential super-religion. We take the religious pluralism of mankind as a basic presupposition: it is not one of our aims to abolish or reduce it. Deep religious faith and commitment will not be a hindrance, but a help in our work for the Global Congress. I for one would not be standing here today, nor would I continue in this venture tomorrow, if it meant any abandonment or compromise of the faith which is the bedrock of my own life.

Yes, to all appearances, it does seem that the human, moral and physical resources available are unequal to the task ahead. Yet those who believe in the purposeful direction of human life and of universal history do not think that the outcome depends merely on the capacity of the puny human instruments involved. There have been many noble enterprises in human experience which have

issued from lowly origins. Weak, despised and sinful though the human agents were, their work yet prospered beyond all expectation. We know that we shall meet opposition; the greater, the more progress. Each one of us has a commitment and involvement which must be constantly revived and assessed. We must be true not only to our shared ideals but also to ourselves and to our own consciences.

We must frankly face the force of the psychological obstacles and reservations which I referred to earlier. We can only surmount those obstacles by insisting on our genuine independence of judgment and action. While we must duly acknowledge our debt of thanks for all help and resources generously provided for the Global Congress, we must make it very clear and firm that the Congress is not being manipulated. We must make it very clear and firm that the Congress follows unhindered and with full freedom of action the stated aims and policy for which it was instituted, and is swayed by no ulterior motives. I regard this as a cardinal point, on which the future of the Global Congress must hinge. If there is doubt or obscurity about its independence and motivation, others will not associate themselves with its work and aims, and this great project will be stillborn.

### AN AFFIRMATION OF HOPE

But enough of the omens of disquiet. Our inauguration is a time not merely for prudent reckoning of the difficulties ahead, but much more for a ringing affirmation of the hope and aspirations that have brought the Congress to birth. If in Latin the verb *augurare* meant 'to consult the auguries' to see if they were propitious, and even implied a sense of foreboding, in Italian *augurare* has become a more joyful word, used to express optimism and well-wishing. The keynote today should not be of foreboding but of well-wishing expectancy.

We have before us a statement of the aims of the Global Congress of the World's religions, and of the spirit with which it should be animated. We have a summary of the

spiritual values to which it will witness and of the human needs with which it will be concerned. Yet these ideals and objectives, noble as they are, cannot exhaust the significance of what the Global Congress of the World's Religions may become. Our plans, our discourses, our documents of association can only be at a surface level. What we see and foresee is but the outward register of reality; what is truly significant, what ultimately matters, is hidden from our gaze in an inner eternal register of reality. We who believe in a Power, and Law, and Love, that is higher and deeper than that of the human individual, and who bow in reverence before it, need no reminding that we shall not be the first authors of what will come to be. We cannot discern what is truly loss or gain *sub specie aeternitatis*. There all our planning, theorizing and activity is of far less avail than humble prayer and meditation.

There are those who would see in the global outreach for religious cooperation and co-responsibility in the present age a manifestation of the emergence of a new stage in the spiritual development of humanity. Is there a providential, or at least a teleological advance of spiritual consciousness, analogous to the emergence of higher forms of cognition in the long history of biological evolution? Are we called to take a willed part in this process, and to assist others to reach those higher levels of spiritual life, knowledge and love? This insight, differently expressed in different cultures, is shared, for example, both by the disciples of Sri Aurobindo and by the disciples of Teilhard de Chardin. Some see in this insight a special motive-force for forwarding the work of the Global Congress of the World's Religions.

Certainly their conviction, like other lofty insights and spiritual aspirations, may serve as an animating motive for those who work toward the objectives of the Global Congress. On the other hand, it is not proposed as a premise which all must accept who embrace the ideals of the Congress. There are other believers who do not see the situation of mankind as an upward progress to new levels of spiritual awareness, but as a dire spiritual predicament in which every human being stands always in the

same absolute need of liberation. Those who have such a religious perspective are as much at home in the Global Congress as those whose perspective is one of evolutionary optimism. The GCWR proposes no premises or tests; it is outside its scope to pronounce on the faith-premises of those who participate in it. Even if they hold diametrically opposed interpretations of mankind's spiritual condition they are all welcome to 'The Tent of Meeting' where all believers and beliefs have a right to be.

### ULTIMATE QUESTIONS

Does this mean, however, that the GCWR can only be a pragmatic institution with humanitarian goals, simply a religious counterpart of the global secular agencies which are also concerned with the physical needs and problems of mankind? Does it imply that at the deeper level of religious belief there can be no meeting of minds in the GCWR? Must the Global Congress exclude from its subjects of discussion all questions relating to the meaning and purpose of human existence, and the way to attain that purpose? Surely we cannot admit that it is so. Although the GCWR cannot be a debating chamber to discuss the rival merits of specific doctrines about mankind's situation and destiny, there is, at a deeper level still, a basic community of insight and attitude among all religious people which enables them to understand and esteem other believers in a way that the non-believer cannot.

Even though the various religions have varying interpretations of the meaning and purpose of human existence, and of the path to attainment, they all share a common conviction that such a spiritual diagnosis and prognosis of the human situation is possible and necessary. One may say that in every religious interpretation of life there is a three-fold aspect: first, there is the starting point or given situation in which man finds himself and in which religion is declared to be relevant; secondly, there is the development, fulfilment or goal toward which the believer should progress; and thirdly, there are the ways and means to proceed from the initial situation to the desired goal. Thus it is meaningful to ask of every religion these

three questions:

1. *From what* situation does religion take its starting point?
2. *To what* does it declare that men are or should be advancing?
3. *By what* means does it say that men are to make this progress?

Simple questions, yes, but basic ones. For the believer, nothing is more important than the answers to these questions. The religions of the world, each in its own way, give answers to these questions. But they have never yet come together in reverent fellowship to ask these questions of one another, and to listen to the answers. If the Global Congress provides a forum for such a basic dialogue of believing mankind, it would not be with the aim or hope of deciding which of the diverse answers are the right ones. But even to talk together at the most basic level of all must produce a deepening of spiritual awareness and of sympathy in those who participate.

I indicate this area of global dialogue, concerned with what I may call that of cosmic interpretation, because it may be lost sight of in our immediate concern with the pressing problems of today, which to some appear as the whole agenda of the GCWR's programme. So before concluding I will say something about each of the three aspects I have distinguished, to indicate the subject area which such a dialogue on 'cosmic interpretation' would cover.

### FROM WHAT?

All religions, then, can be said to offer a key to understanding man's existence and his place in the universe. All of them take some account of a 'starting point' or given situation in which man finds himself and in which religion is declared relevant, both for the individual and for the community. A religious outlook may assert and accept man's given situation as good, and stress life-acceptance rather than deliverance from evil. Often, however, as I have remarked earlier, religious interpretations of the world include a more sombre concept of an initial predica-

ment in their account of the situation in which religion is meaningful and important. It is inappropriate to contrast life-accepting religions and life-redeeming religions as if the former were optimistic and the latter were pessimistic. Although the latter explain that man is in a dire predicament, the message of liberation from that predicament is not a message of pessimism but of joyous optimism.

The predicament from which human beings are to be liberated, or which is to be made more bearable, may be identified in very concrete terms as the miseries, dangers and material necessities of day-to-day life. In the more metaphysical religions the predicament is explained in less material terms. There may be a sense of spiritual insufficiency, a sighing for release from present anxiety and sorrow, or from ignorance and spiritual blindness, together with a yearning for some higher development of life or soul. The predicament may be conceived as the threat of dissolution of man's personality in death; it may be the weary wheel of metempsychosis, by which the transmigrating soul must ever return to new incarnations in this world of misery; it may be ignorance of true reality, or slavery to desire; it may be a state of sin, regarded as either a contamination making one personally unworthy, or as an alienation from God, or as both; it may be divine wrath and chastisement, or hell or cosmic evil; or the ultimate predicament from which men yearn to be released may be regarded as self or existence itself. Some religions describe the predicament of man's life as a combination of several of those elements.

### TO WHAT?

A religion is never a merely static system. It implies direction and dynamism—it is a search, a movement, a *way*. For each individual it offers a progression from the initial life-situation toward some kind of further development or fulfilment. For society as a whole it offers a corporate purpose to be realized, for at least the renewed realization for each generation of a traditional and prized socioreligious system. The promised goals may be visualized as wholly obtainable in the here-and-now: for

instance, as satisfaction for material needs and desires, protection from evils and dangers in everyday life, and prosperity both for the individual and the social group. Or the goals may be conceived in more spiritual forms: for instance, as growth in true knowledge of reality; or as perfection of human personality, character or mental attitude; or as the attaining of harmony with the nature or cosmic forces. Or they may be explained in terms of an after-life or of a supernatural transformation. In this case there may be a shorter-term goal in this present world, and longer-term goal in some other sphere of existence.

So the fulfillment may be conceived as only begun in this life (for example, by spiritual rebirth, by forgiveness of sins and justification, by victory over evil and demonic powers, by meriting a nobler reincarnation by illumination and mystical union, by moral perfection), while still awaiting a consummation in a final state beyond this mortal existence. This final state may be conceived as spiritual immortality, or as bodily resurrection, or as heaven and heavenly rewards, or as Nirvana, or as absorption in the All, or as personal union with God, or as a combination of such elements making up eternal beatitude.

### BY WHAT?

A life-accepting religious ideal will hold out patterns of conduct and religious response by which the desired acceptance or enhancement of life, nature and cosmic good may be made. Soteriological religions may be distinguished by their different doctrines about the way deliverance from evil, and achievement of beatitude, is to be brought about. Some may attribute the saving process wholly to divine action; others may attribute it to man's striving; others again may assert that the process includes both elements. There may be belief in the existence of a saviour, or saviours, divine or human, who perform a work of liberation from which the worshipers may consequently benefit; or at least of a mediator or teacher who reveals to men the path by which their deliverance can be sought. There may be a ritual system, usually administered by a priesthood, through which the benefits of

salvation are communicated to the initiates. Often there is also emphasis on observances by which a man must work out, or at least cooperate in his own progress to the goal. In almost all religions, prayer and worship in some form have a central place among the duties of the believers.

In some religions, the practice of a religious way of life and code of conduct is given paramount importance and may be of more concern than doctrines, a spiritual experience or other-worldly expectations. A religious sanction is extended to morality, and commonly—though not universally—the observance of the ethical code is included among the necessary means leading to the religious end.

Likewise the *social* dimension is vital, and the role of believers within the religiously sanctioned community is of great importance in their path to the goal. In some instances there is a significant distinction between the sacred community and society around it, but in other instances such a distinction is not valid.

From what power does religion take its rise and course? Some religions hold that the initiative comes from man's side, and that he can attain the goal of religion by his own seeking. In several religions the primacy of the divine initiative is a fundamental tenet. They insist that the religion is above all a self-disclosure by God, without which man could never find God, however long and earnest his search. Commonly religions which stress the divine self-revelation also admit a divinely bestowed desire, tendency, or at least receptivity in man himself, by which he is capable of being directed to the final goal of religion, by making a free response.

### THE CALL OF THE HOLY

I have dwelt on these questions of cosmic interpretation because they are the context of discourse of the world's religions, which we hope will eventually, within the Global Congress, enter into dialogue on fundamentals. I have also dwelt upon them because they remind us that in the thinking, saying and doing, of the GCWR there is, or must be, a dimension which is lacking in all other international and trans-world associations. That is the dimension of the

Holy. The Global Congress of the World's Religions may have the advantages of distinguished academic participation, of an admirable constitution, and of an efficient organization: these are necessary, but in themselves they provide only the skeletal structure of the body. It is only the Holy—acknowledged in thought, word and deed—that will make these dry bones live.

#### IV DISCUSSION

*DR. LEWIS:* We have approximately fifteen minutes for commentary and questions to Dr. Clark. Come please to the microphone, line up if you like, and that will expedite the process. John.

*JOHN MEAGHER:* Dr. Clark has aptly and eloquently remarked that faith is not a hindrance but a help. I wish to express my gratitude for that emphasis, which helps this enterprise with an attempt on staying very clear from alternative enterprises that pretend to be of the same kind. Now we have as a major agenda: mutual forgiveness for not taking seriously each other's faith.

Faith becomes a hindrance rather than a help if the investment of faith also makes the presumption that the representatives of the world religions are understood to be representing religions that are already mature. I myself believe that is a misconception. I think that all religions are in their adolescence. There is no role model for what maturity is. That must be invented. It can be invented only if we acknowledge that we are at best in our adolescence, and learn from one another as carefully as we can what it might be to become mature. In that sense, in my judgment, faith will be a help and not a hindrance.

*DR. CLARK:* I thank my friend, John Meagher for that contribution. I think it is quite inappropriate, yet I am in a position of seeming to have answers here. I just want to learn from you, and I thank each of you for what you have

contributed.

**PETRO B. T. BILANIUK:** Deacon Petro from the University of Toronto, St. Michael's College. We must be very careful with our terminology. I would abstain from using terms like *dialogue*. Dialogue implies discussion between two partners. We must use words like *polylogue*, that is, discussion of many partners of equal value and equal weight and equal dignity. That is what I envisage. This is a polylogue of the leaders of different religions; secondly, it is a polylogue of philosophers and other students of religions, that is, it is a polylogue of believers and unbelievers. The subject of study should include all friendly and unfriendly believers and unbelievers. Most of all, we should include serious scholars. That is we should be cultivating a scholarly, scientific and critical approach to the questions of religion. Second, we have to distinguish *objects* of religious study. This includes religion in all of its aspects and dimensions, as well as different methodologies and approaches to religion—theological and mystical and spiritual and philosophical, anthropological, scientific and statistical, political, geographical, and others. We should keep a balance in all these aspects and dimensions. Otherwise it could degenerate to tyrannies of the stronger above the weaker, of the more eloquent over the less eloquent. Thank you.

**DR. LEWIS:** Thank you, Petro. Well received. Sir.

**AVTAR S. ATWAL:** I formally belong to the Sikh faith. I am a scientist by training. Sikhism as you know is an extension of Hinduism, but it has adopted a number of practices and ideas from other religions also. I have been thinking very seriously as to the nature of this forum which is a great and grand idea. How will it operate in the future? I would like to speak in an analogical manner. All the religions have their houses. The doors open toward the center. Now this forum is at the center. The people who belong to religious faiths are on the outer circle. You can say with this arrangement that people come from the outer circle up to the center of their homes. Now the thing is that this forum expects that people will come to the center, or

that people who stand at the doorways of their houses will try to listen to what is being said at the center, or, what is the function? I would like to have this explained.

*DR. LEWIS:* Actually, there is a great deal that could be said in response to that question. We've struggled with the way we say what we're about over these four or five years. Is it just people who are at home in their traditional faith, the faith in which, perhaps, they were raised? What about the Reductionists? Do they get to attend the Global Congress, too? What about people who are independently religious, who perhaps don't have a house to be in anymore? We have consistently said that as long as a person espouses the general intention as expressed in the preamble and in our other documents, that they are welcome. They are welcome to the center if their work, their energy, their personal influence, can be expended for the sake of the intentions of the Global Congress. We don't have to exclude anybody or any religious or philosophical or quasi-philosophical presuppositions if they are in favor of what we are doing. If that happens, then one loses all kinds of very interesting renegade types who have a great deal to say but who might not be acceptable to others. I have found that even the most respectable people to some camps are completely disreputable in other camps. It seems to me that our work is best done when we are as inclusive as possible. We can continue that discussion. Richard.

*RICHARD QUEBEDEAUX:* Karl Marx, in his commentary on Ludwig Feuerbach, made a very famous statement which I think should be considered by every religion in the world. He said that the philosophers, and I might also add the theologians, have sought to understand the world. The point, however, is to change it. Are we going to be a congress of people who seek to understand each other's religions, to respect each other and to tolerate each other? If so, I don't think it's enough. There have been other groups that have been at many ecumenical discussions over the past ten years or longer, particularly in the Christian tradition. I have yet to go to one formal ecumenical meeting where the attitude of the people in meeting each other is

one of love and service. My association with the Unification Movement has led me to believe, and I will say this now, that I have a hunch that this Congress will stand or fall on one thing: That one thing is how much we as individuals in our encounter with those others who wish to participate, how much we are willing to flesh out love, and the best way to flesh it out I think is through service. I like Rev. Moon's statement in his speech that goodness is the practice of love. I think that if we try to change people's minds before trying to change their hearts, we're not going to get anywhere. I find that with interrelational service, despite disagreement, the heart will be changed, and then we can change people's minds. How this is to be done is a very hard thing, but I'm very happy that it is the Unification Movement that is sponsoring this. Because of that, I have a hope that it will happen. Thank you.

*DR. LEWIS:* I see that at least five more people are ready to speak, so if I may encourage you to make your comments as brief as possible, or perhaps get to your question as quickly as possible, because we are supposed to eat at noon. Constantine.

*CONSTANTINE TSIRPANLIS:* My name is Constantine Tsirpanlis. I come originally from Greece. I am Greek Orthodox. I teach at the Unification Theological Seminary. I teach Orthodox theology and ecumenical Christianity. I was particularly impressed by the point that we should establish a collaboration with major union societies like the World Council of Churches and others. I am really very happy to see many more people participating in this conference than two years ago. This is my first point. Secondly, these conferences are sponsored by the Unification Movement. There is nothing wrong with that but we might lose our global association. Do not be surprised if the World Council of Churches will reject our collaboration. Don't be so optimistic. This is a unique congress.

Perhaps the title and the purpose must be reconsidered and changed. Personally, I don't like the word *Congress*. I don't like the word *religions* because religions divide. Politics and religions divide more than anything else. I would

like to see more of a social, political, and educational focus than a religious one. Religion comes afterwards when hearts become united. But the point is that to have such a tremendous impact, a universal impact, the Congress must appeal seriously to everyone, not just to representatives of religions or to the Eastern Orthodox Church, but to all individuals. It must involve the talents, the desires, the positive intention of people. There are many people I know who do not have any idea about this kind of unique effort. This is my feeling.

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you Constantine. The positive recommendations in your comment I think are very well made. The interest in political, economic and social concerns can certainly become a part of our agenda. In principle, they already are. I cannot avoid making one or two comments. There are only two ways in which the Unification Church sponsors or otherwise supports this activity. It was originally the idea of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon who sent a messenger to me and asked that we begin this kind of an activity. Since that time I've had almost no communication from him at all other than a polite wave across the hall once in a while. I guess he thinks we're doing a good enough job so he doesn't have to tamper with it. The other way in which the Unification people have supported us is that they have paid the bills so far. There is no other sense in which the Unification Movement directly in terms of policy or in any other way, is the sponsor of the Global Congress. We are open to all kinds of sponsorship, and we do not intend to limit ourselves only to the sponsorship of the Unification Movement. Finally, I would be desperately disappointed if, once all wisdom and means were extended, we were not able to link with our Christian brothers at the World Council of Churches. We will extend every effort to make that kind of linkage possible. Dr. Johnson.

*DR. KURT JOHNSON:* Because of what you said, what I'm going to say is in context. I have to speak on behalf of all those who brought you here and to say a word of thanks and gratitude to those who have really made it possible. The meetings of the Global Congress here were staggered

against the ICUS schedule which made it a very grueling schedule for the people who are here from the Board of Trustees. I'll go back to what Rev. Moon said last night that Mrs. Moon was upset that he brought you here but you have no time to enjoy it. Our hearts empathize with that. That is unfortunate. We feel badly about that. In the past I've been able to gauge things by how pale Marcus is and whether Mrs. Clark is still smiling. We're doing pretty well. She's still smiling. But I want to have a chance to say we're grateful in this birth period of the Global Congress, that the relationships between us and you all have been so cordial, smooth, flexible, authentic and real. I feel that we've done something to fulfill Richard's desire that things be done in the spirit of love and something which is very good. The other thanks that I wanted to give was to the students from the Seminary who came here to staff this conference. They have responded to the direction that was given them. They've done that without any resentment. That has allowed the conference to go on. I want to make sure that they don't feel that that is unappreciated. We do appreciate the sacrifice that they've made.

*DR. LEWIS:* Yes!

*PANOS BARDIS:* I'm Dr. Panos Bardis from the University of Toledo. First of all I would like to correct an almost universal mistake which I find most annoying. I hear it so often. Dialogue does not mean conversation involving two individuals. "Dia" means two; "logos" means word. It can involve any number of people. Let me assure you that Decalogue does not involve a conversation between one Moses and nine Jehovahs. Likewise, like Constantine, both of us are of Hellenic descent, I am not gouging, I like to say nice things to people. I see something wonderful in every individual, every meeting, every person. I must say I found your title intriguing, fascinating, and inspiring. I have only one minor suggestion. As I was listening, I was beginning to conclude that what we need is a definition of religion. This is what I am advocating. As you know, etiomologically, we have two theories from the Latin. "Religio" which means to seize with fear and I do hope we

fear. The more prominent theory is the root "re-ligare," which means "to tie," like to bind. I hope we are bound together. Now, how about a definition? We have many of them. One of the simplest ones is the one by E. B. Tylor, which is "religion is a belief in spiritual beings." That means, this definition includes primitive religion, oriental religion, monotheism, mysticism, Muslim, spiritualists and so forth. *But* this definition will exclude, in view of their nature, Confucianism and Buddhism. So I don't like it. Another famous one is that of Matthew Arnold. This was influenced by the Hebrew prophets. It is that religion is "morality touched by emotion." I don't like it either because religion includes emotional immorality. In my opinion a definition encompassing or including the following elements at least, would be useful: One, God or gods; two, other spirits, three, the world beyond our own, four, an emotional experience such as the beatific visions of the mystics and so on; five, harmony between the individual and the entire cosmos, the universe; six, an attitude of mind; seven and last, individual and social practices related to religion. This would take care of many of the suggestions made by our colleagues. Let me add briefly that the importance of religion is obvious. We don't have to debate it. Even if there were no God we would talk to Him. The more I study nature the more I realize that there must be a Supreme Being that created everything with mathematical exactment and wisdom. Lastly, do not be misled by those who emphasize the way of secularism. The masses still believe in religion. The best evidence I can give you is this: In the United States, which is so secular, the masses still believe. For instance, in 1979, the voluntary contribution to charity in the United States was \$125 billion. Of that, 27% went to the churches. To me, that means a great deal. Thank you very much.

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you. Will the next three speakers make their comments as brief as possible, and then we will conclude.

*PAUL BADHAM:* I'm Paul Badham. I'm speaking as a Christian. I'm from the country of Wales. I'm very con-

cerned about the terminology of the letter which is going to be written soon. It seems to me this could be potentially very damaging to Christian participation in the Global Congress of Religions. It seems to me very important that the Global Congress should insist that international hotels should respect the religious views of those whose religions prescribe vegetarian or other particular dietary regimens. But the Congress can not endorse, or give any kind of moral superiority, to any particular dietary function. Otherwise that would contradict the authoritative New Testament, and that would be quite injurious.

*DR. LEWIS:* Quite right.

*PAUL BADHAM:* The other problem is that I come from a country where the main source of food comes from sheep bred on upland farms which cannot be used for any other purposes. They will not grow any kind of crop. For the protein enrichment of the world, they have to grow sheep. That is very important if we object to the way valuable cereal crops are fed to animals in America. This should not be made a universal rule because of the problems of my own country.

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you, Mr. Badham. You can help me finish the letter at lunch.

*CHRISTIAN R. GABA:* Christian Gaba, the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. I want to make a very brief comment on the role of different religions within the set up of the GCWR with special reference to religion in traditional Africa. We must be cordial to those that come to talk about any of these religions. But missionaries and theologians look at African religions from the perspective of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Anthropologists look at religion from the point of the society not from that of faith. If we bear this in mind, it means that the experts cannot tell us about African religion as it really is. If we want to know about African religion as religion, we need to hear about it from Africans themselves. Thank you very much.

*DR. LEWIS:* Thank you Dr. Gaba. Since our first scheduled consultation will be precisely with the religions of

Africa, and since you will be helping to set that up, we will be as sensitive to those concerns as we possibly can. Final question or comment.

*KASIA KOPACZ:* I want to reaffirm what Dr. Kurt Johnson said. I'm a Seminary student and my name is Kasia Kopacz. I was involved in helping to make this happen. I don't feel any resentment at all. I came here to help you in honor and respect. I believe in God and people. I care about each of you individually as people, and to some degree as representatives of various faiths. People brought up a point about equal value. Our value doesn't come from our ability to represent our religion. Certainly no one *can* represent Christianity. I can't represent the Unification Church. I can barely represent myself because I don't always know my own feelings. For those of us who believe in God, I feel that God has needs. Our value comes from the fact that we want to do something about it and that we are willing to do something about it. My main point is that I wanted to help each of you. I wish I knew all of your names, to reaffirm that I care for you deeply, for everyone in this world. Thank you (Applause).

*DR. LEWIS:* Francis, do you have any final comments?

*DR. FRANCIS CLARK:* No.

*DR. LEWIS:* I'll take a minute to read this scribbled draft. We'll not discuss it here. If you have any recommendations you would like to make or amendments or any other changes, please contact me privately and we'll take care of that. "Dear Sirs (and the sirs will be Mr. Neil Salonen and Mr. Richard Wojcik, the management of Hilton Hotels in general, and the management of the Fountainsbleau): During the recent 9th ICUS and the fourth annual conference of the GCWR, it was recurrently our experience that several participants, whose religious and other dietary requirements forbid their eating of pork, or require a vegetarian diet, were disappointed when they arrived at tables. Even after considerable effort was made to arrange a "no-pork" section in the dining room, and adequate accommodation was granted to this request on *one*

occasion, nevertheless at the next meal, Muslims were being served sausage and ham; and Hindus, Buddhists and other vegetarians were being asked to eat meat against their conscience or perforced to fast. Our suggestions are as follows: 1) At subsequent gatherings, sufficient advanced planning needs to be undertaken to ensure that "no-pork" and "vegetarian tables" be clearly marked; 2) That there be an adequate amount of porkless or meatless meals so that none of the serving persons will have cause to say "We've run out," or to dodge their responsibility through other evasive means; 3) that the pork-free and meatless meals will be prepared under the supervision of someone who understands that kind of diet, so that these meals will be nutritionally balanced, tasty, and otherwise appealing. We thank you in advance for your attention to these details and invite you to join with us in the perennial work of becoming sensitive to the habits, needs, and delights of our fellow human beings." As I said, it can be amended and will be I'm sure.

Finally, let me say one more time: Thank you for having attended our 4th and last Conference towards a Global Congress of the World's Religions. Why is it our last? Because the Global Congress is now some kind of a reality. It would be inappropriate to have a fifth conference towards it. What we hope is that next year at the ICUS, we will be having our Far East consultation between the Global Congress and the religions of the Far Orient. At that time, no doubt many of you will be participants in that consultation. Between now and that time many of you will have helped us in arranging that consultation. In any event, we can say, "next year in Seoul." Thank you very much.

SECTION B  
THE SEOUL PROCEEDINGS

THE GLOBAL CONGRESS  
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

SEOUL, KOREA  
NOVEMBER 11-12, 1981

# I

## OPENING REMARKS

### FIRST SESSION

*HENRY O. THOMPSON:* Good evening. Welcome to the GCWR meeting in Seoul, Korea. My name is Henry O. Thompson. I am Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the Global Congress of the World's Religions.

We have with us this evening here on my left, one of the three Presidents of the Global Congress, Dr. David Kalupahana, President for Communication. Dr. Kalupahana is with the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawaii. We have Dr. Archie Bahm in the front row on the end. Dr. Bahm is retired Professor of Religion from the University of New Mexico, and is Secretary of the Trustees. Perhaps later this evening our Treasurer, Dr. Isma'il R. al Faruqi will be with us. Dr. al Faruqi is Professor of Islamics at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pa. He is presently detained with another program. We have two of our general Board members with us this evening: Dr. Seshagiri Rao, Professor of Religion at the University of Virginia, and Dr. Padmasiri de Silva, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, University of Penadeniya, Sri Lanka. We will be hearing from Dr. de Silva later in the program. There has been a slight change in the order of our program. We will hear the address first from Dr. Philip H. Hwang. Later we will have the reports from Dr. de Silva and a report on the inauguration this past summer of the African Institute for the Study of

### Human Values.

It is a pleasure to welcome to this meeting our speakers for tomorrow evening—Representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We have with us tonight Mr. Pema Gyalpo Gyari, Liaison Officer of the Dalai Lama in his office in Tokyo and the Venerable Geshe Tenpa Gyaltzen, also from the Tokyo office. We also have with us this evening Mr. Tenzin Tethong, who is the Dalai Lama's representative for North America. Mr. Tethong's office is in New York City. They will be speaking tomorrow night in our program at 8:00 p.m., here in this same room. You are all most welcome. I hope you will be with us.

We have two other persons from Sri Lanka, Dr. Labuduwe Siridhamma, and the Venerable Ananda Mangala, although the Venerable Mangala is now living in Singapore. We extend a special welcome to you to our program this evening and again tomorrow night.

In the foyer as you came in you may or may not have noticed what we colloquially call the "big book." Last year when we inaugurated the Global Congress of the World's Religions we started a large book of signatures. People who are willing to express their support of the Global Congress can sign this book as an expression of that support and of their interest. If you would like to join us in this great venture, please sign the book. It is on the table in the foyer against that wall. If you have not already seen it you are most welcome to sign that book after our program this evening and we welcome your signature and your support.

Many of you have already signed your name and address at our desk in the Lotte Hotel foyer on the second floor. But if you have not yet given us your name and address and would like to be included in future mailings, would you be sure and sign on one of the several sign-up sheets going around. We need your name and address so that we can be in touch with you when we have something to share with you.

You will hear more tomorrow night from our Trustees and from Dr. Kalupahana as he reports on the current and hoped for activities of our Global Congress in the near future. I hope that you will come back tomorrow evening

and hear that portion of our program. Dr. Kalupahana will introduce our speaker this evening.

*DAVID KALUPAHANA:* Venerable Sirs, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is indeed my privilege to welcome you to the first regular meeting of the GCWR after its inauguration in Miami Beach in November, 1980.

As some of you are aware, the Global Congress came into existence after the lengthy discussions and communications with academicians who are involved in the study of the World's Religions. The inspiration for this Congress came from Rev. Sun Myung Moon. The moral and financial support has been provided so far by two institutions associated with the Unification Church.

At this time it is my duty to express our indebtedness to the International Cultural Foundation of New York. The ICF has enabled us to meet regularly during the last five years, during their meetings, one of which we are attending this week, the International Conference of the Unity of Sciences. The second group from the Unification Church that has been supporting us is the Unification Theological Seminary with Mr. David Kim as its President. They have rendered yeoman service to the Global Congress by providing facilities for the founding members of the Global Congress to meet at various places and at various times, in order to organize this Global Congress. We, the Board of Trustees of the Global Congress of the World's Religions, are very much indebted to these two institutions.

Today's meeting is in a sense unprecedented. Most of the meetings that we have had so far during the last five or six years were primarily attended by what I would call lay persons. Today, for the first time, we have several religious dignitaries. Two of them represent the Theravada Buddhist tradition in Sri Lanka and three represent the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

I am sure all of you will agree with me that the Global Congress is not only strengthened by their presence but it is also sanctified by their presence. I have had the opportunity of addressing the Global Congress when we had the meetings called Towards a Global Congress—meetings of the Global Congress in its formation. I had the opportunity

to speak several times at these meetings but today is the only time I could address this group with the words 'Venerable Sirs, Ladies and Gentlemen.'

On behalf of the Global Congress I wish to extend a warm welcome to these religious dignitaries. I hope that their participation will lend more serenity and sacredness to the adventures that the Global Congress has undertaken. It is not a mere accident that this change in the constituency of the Global Congress has taken place when we happen to meet in a place called the Land of the Morning Calm. I sincerely hope that this serenity and calmness that have been injected into the life of the Global Congress will remain for us forever, as we struggle to understand the great diversity as well as the uniformity of the religious experiences of mankind. We have started with the assumption that there is diversity in the religious experiences of mankind. We are guided by the belief that the diversity need not lead to conflict among various religiously motivated persons. We are not dedicated to discovering what the right or the true religion is as opposed to what is false, but to understanding the common springs of the religious behavior of humanity. We are inspired by the hope that such a discovering and understanding will enable us to put an end to the conflict rampant in a world of dogmatism and intolerance. We are encouraged by the growing sympathy for the efforts and endeavors of the Global Congress of the World's Religions and finally we are convinced that our efforts will succeed so long as we act with sincerity and tolerance.

It is indeed my privilege today to introduce our keynote speaker tonight. He is Professor Philip H. Hwang who has a very distinguished career not only here in Seoul, but also in America. At present he is Professor of Philosophy at Dongguk University—a Buddhist University in Seoul. He has his B.A. in Philosophy of Religion from the Seoul National University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma, where he taught for a while. He has devoted his life to comparative religion and comparative philosophy. He has authored two valuable contributions. One is an *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*,

3rd ed. (Seoul: Chong. Ro Pub. Co., 1981). His doctoral dissertation is an important critical study of Mencius' *Philosophy of Human Nature With Special Reference to Kant and Confucius*, available through University Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Michigan. His Ph.D. is from the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma.

He was born into a Christian family. He says that at one stage he was a Jesus freak. Now he is devoting his time to the study of Confucianism. He told me that he is very interested in getting into Buddhism. Maybe I am interested in Buddhism too—that is why he wanted to say that. No—the reason why he wanted to say that is that he is genuinely interested in comparative religion and philosophy! He is going to speak to us tonight on a very valuable topic, very relevant to the theme of the GCWR. It is "Interreligious Dialogue—Its Reasons, Attitudes and Necessary Assumptions." Dr. Hwang.

**DR. PHILIP H. HWANG:** Mr. President, distinguished Board members of the GCWR and Ladies and Gentlemen. I am greatly honored to be invited to share with you some of the thoughts I have been thinking for the last several years, particularly since I came back to Korea in 1978.

I would like to say two things before I start reading my paper. The first is that I was given very little time to write this paper. The copy you have is only one half the full length of the paper. I will expand while I am reading the paper.

Secondly, I was given virtually no information about the nature of the paper. I suppose there are in general two kinds of papers. One is delivered to a general audience like this, and the second is more for small group discussions with the emphasis on logical argument.

Initially, my paper more or less was for the second category. I made some changes at the last minute. How it will come out, I do not know. However, I hope you will be able to follow the reasoning.

## II

### AN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE: ITS REASONS, ATTITUDES AND NECESSARY ASSUMPTIONS

by Philip H. Hwang

There are unfortunately some religious people who sincerely doubt or consciously ignore any possibility for a genuine dialogue between different religions. They are in short outdated. But most religious as well as nonreligious people seriously talk about it. They often do not understand exactly why there should be a meeting between religions in the first place, which attitude is most appropriate for such a meeting, and what necessary assumptions, if any, are needed. In this paper, I will first elaborate some practical and theoretical reasons why all religions must work together, and secondly, discuss several attitudes we can have toward the religions of other people, and finally, propose some "rules" to follow if we are to engage in a genuine dialogue between different religions.

#### WHY SHOULD ALL RELIGIONS WORK TOGETHER?

What are the reasons that all religions, while making "conflicting truth-claims," should dialogue and work together?

1. *Politically*, we are living today in "one world." What happens at one corner of the world is no longer a "fire over the river" to the rest of the world, due to the fast develop-

ment of transportation and communication systems during the last century. In other words, we are now "forced to live together," whether we like it or not. For example, we Koreans deal with Russians and Communist Chinese, not because we want to but because we must. Truly there is no—and there cannot be—Robinson Crusoe in this 20th century. This means that the East and the West, Koreans and non-Koreans, our religions and other people's religions, must meet and influence or be influenced by one another. Politically speaking, in short, the interreligious dialogue is a must in this "one world."

2. *Anthropologically*, it is a plain fact that all human beings have many similarities as well as differences according to place and time, and, in addition, that we cannot make any arbitrary value judgments on these differences. There is no reason whatsoever to claim an essential superiority or inferiority of one culture to the others. Thus Levi-Strauss says that the difference between the so-called primitive mind and the modern mind...

lies, not in the quality of the intellectual process but in the nature of things to which it is applied... the same logical processes operate in myth as in science, and... man has always been thinking equally well; the improvement lies, not in the alleged progress of man's mind, but in the discovery of new areas to which it may apply its unchanged and unchanging powers.<sup>1</sup>

Mircea Eliade goes one step further and argues that if we are to find a real essence of *homo religious*, it is always better to study primitive people who were living close to the realm of the sacred than modern people who are living in a desacralized society.<sup>2</sup> This is why, we can say, there are many similarities as well as many differences in all religions, i.e., in man's pursuit of Ultimate Reality.

3. *Sociologically*, all religions should be able to make some positive contributions to society, since they are after all one form of human culture. This does not mean all religions are only epiphenomena of society. Rather, it means that the language of religion is, and must be, a human

language. Of course, sometimes we can have sensible talk about an Almighty God within certain religious contexts, assuming that such substance in fact exists. But even here we should not forget that such talk is still made by imperfect human beings, and, in this sense, there cannot be by definition one proper interpretation of God's words. This is why, I think, James Cone, an American Black theologian, argues that even God's revelation presupposes human capacity to understand it.<sup>3</sup>

Now it is only the next step that all religions should dialogue and cooperate with one another, if they are to make any genuine contributions to society. This was clearly shown by an historical example of the Sam-Il Movement, where all Korean religious leaders, regardless of their denominations, united to fight against Japanese aggression. When religions do not meet with each other, but fight instead, they will only follow the dictates of society, rather than lead society in a desirable direction.

4. *Religiologically*, it is possible and even desirable, in certain contexts, for all religious people to have a feeling of superiority towards their own religion compared with those of others, just as all individuals should have a self-affirmative attitude. Thus Paul Tillich says:

If a group—like an individual—is convinced that it possesses a truth, it implicitly denies those claims to truth which conflict with that truth. I would call this the natural self-affirmation in the realm of knowledge; it is only another word for personal certainty... It is natural and unavoidable that Christians affirm the fundamental assertion of Christianity that Jesus is the Christ and reject what denies this assertion. What is permitted to the sceptic cannot be forbidden to the Christians—or, for that matter, to the adherent of any other religion."<sup>4</sup>

But in order to have such a superiority feeling, we must first know other people's religions. Uncompared superiority or inferiority does not even make sense.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, we must first know others in order to know who we are. To know others is a necessary condition to know

ourselves.

Now some might argue that if we know all religions, assuming this to be possible, then we will find only one among them has truth and the rest have none. But this is a gross mistake. On the contrary, we will find, I think, that truth cannot be monopolized by any one religion. This is why Joachim Wach declares that the proper attitude of religiology is not that we can know all religions if we know one, but that we can claim to know one only if we know all religions, however superficially.<sup>6</sup>

5. *Theologically*, an interreligious dialogue is necessary for the refinement, development or revision, if necessary, of one's own religion. For religious faith is never static or fixed, but it always moves forward by meeting other other religions or social ideologies. A tadpole must become a frog one day; it cannot remain a tadpole forever. And as a grown frog, it must live with other frogs within the same pond. In a similar way, no religion can remain in its early stages; it must mature and meet other religions in a dynamic fashion.

Thus Tillich, who admits that one sect of Christianity has been very harsh and cruel to other sects, argues that Christianity as a whole has always been more generous to other religions.<sup>7</sup> In a similar way, Wach declares that "Christians are not born, but made"<sup>8</sup>

## SEVERAL ATTITUDES

I have so far described political, anthropological, sociological, religiological and theological reasons why all different religions should dialogue and work together.<sup>9</sup> I will now discuss several attitudes one can have toward other people's religions by borrowing Raimundo Panikkar's key points, and then discuss some necessary postulates we must have in order to have a genuine dialogue.

1. There is an extreme *exclusivism* which considers any attempt to have a genuine interreligious dialogue impossible. Panikkar states the reason for this attitude:

A believing member of a religion in one way or another considers his religion to be true. Now, the

claim to truth has a certain built-in claim to exclusivity. If a given statement is true, its contradictory cannot also be true. And if a certain human tradition claims to offer a universal context for truth, anything contrary to that 'universal truth' will have to be declared false.<sup>10</sup>

This attitude has several advantages. Since one believes that he follows a universal, even an absolute truth rather than a partial and imperfect truth, he can truly be committed to his truth and even considers his defense of his own religion as a command of God. He thus can be a "true believer."

On the other hand, this attitude has many difficulties:

First, it carries with it the obvious danger of intolerance, hubris and contempt for others. 'We belong to the club of truth.' It further bears the intrinsic weakness of assuming an almost purely logical conception of truth and the uncritical attitude of an epistemological naivete. Truth is many faced and even if you assume that God speaks an exclusive language, everything depends on your understanding of it so that you may never really know whether your interpretation is the *only* right one. To recur to a superhuman instance on the discussion among two religious beliefs does not solve any question, for it is often the case that God 'speaks' also to others, and both partners relying on God's authority will always need human mediation, so that ultimately God's authority depends on Man's interpretation (of the divine revelation).<sup>11</sup>

2. At the opposite pole from extreme exclusivism, there is an extreme *inclusivism* which claims that since every religion has its own truth, one can follow one's path and cannot condemn the others. This attitude honestly admits the plurality of religions and the varieties of religious experiences, and does not admit any inconsistency or contradiction among religions.

On the other hand, this attitude also entails some difficulties. First, the attitude tends to be an extreme relativism of truth and thus denies the very existence of truth,

as many sophists did in the pre-Socratic period. Or, it tends toward an extreme cultural relativism and thus denies any positive role which religions can play in society. Furthermore, it also presents...

... the danger of hybris, since it is only you who have the privilege of an all-embracing vision and tolerant attitude, you who allot to the others the place they must take in the universe. You are tolerant in your own eyes, but not in the eyes of those who challenge your right to be on top. Furthermore, it has the intrinsic difficulties of an almost alogical conception of truth and a built-in inner contradiction when the attitude is spelt out in theory and praxis.<sup>12</sup>

On this position, one can easily make a mistake by saying something like only Christians, or only Confucians, or only Buddhists are generous toward all other religions.

3. Between an extreme exclusivism and an extreme inclusivism, there is a general *parallelism* which claims that all different religious creeds, "in spite of meanderings and crossings, actually run parallel to meet only in the ultimate, in the *eschaton*, at the very end of human pilgrimage." Thus one can say on this position that Christian love, Confucian humanity and Buddhist compassion all run parallel and are "similar paths."

Now it is easy to see that the attitude presents some positive advantages:

It is tolerant, it respects the others and does not judge them. It avoids muddy syncretisms and eclecticism that concoct a religion according to our private tastes; it keeps the boundaries clear and spurs constant reform of one's own ways.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, this attitude is not free from difficulties either:

First of all it seems to go against the historical experience that the different religious and human traditions of the world have usually emerged from mutual interferences, influences and fertilizations. It too hastily assumes, furthermore, that

every human tradition has in itself all the elements for further growth and development; in a word, it assumes the self-sufficiency of every tradition and seems to deny the need of convenience of mutual learning, or the need to walk outside the walls of one particular human tradition—as if in every one of them the entire human experience were crystallized or condensed. It flatters every one of us to hear that we possess *in nuce* all we need for a full human and religious maturity, but it splits the family of Man into watertight compartments, making any kind of conversion a real betrayal of one's own being.<sup>14</sup>

It is indeed a desirable beginning to compare Socrates with Confucius, Logos with Tao, Jesus with Buddha, love with compassion and so forth. But a true interreligious dialogue should not end there; it should go beyond making "catalogues." A real dynamic meeting is not static, but lies in a "moving encounter."

4. Finally, there is a dynamic *pluralism*. This attitude honestly admits the *de facto* phenomenon that there *are* many different religions in this world and one can have varieties of religious experiences even within one religious tradition. In other words, it believes that one cannot talk about "ought" without mentioning or referring to "is," although it may be possible to deduce "ought" from "is." Furthermore, it believes that the existence of so many religious types, sects and creeds is not necessarily a regrettable thing. William James writes on this point:

We must frankly recognize the fact that we live in partial systems, and that parts are not interchangeable in the spiritual life. If we are peevish and jealous, destruction of the self must be an element of our religions; why need it be one if we are good and sympathetic from the outset? Unquestionably, some men have the completer experience and the higher vocation, here just as in the social world; but for each man to stay in his own experience, whate'er it be, and for others to tolerate him there, is surely the best.<sup>15</sup>

But this "factual" pluralism needs to transform itself into "dynamic" pluralism. The word "dynamic" here means a dialectical power to find a meeting point between an unrelated plurality and a monolithic unity, a power to reject both the victory of one religion over all other religions and the unity of all religions within one system. In other words, this attitude claims that one should treat all religions of other people as a teacher of one's own religion and should not neglect the importance of differences as well as that of similarities among religions. Panikkar explains the rationale behind this attitude:

The aim of the intrareligious dialogue is understanding. It is not to win over the other or to come to a total agreement or a universal religion. The ideal is communication in order to bridge the gulfs of mutual ignorance and misunderstandings between the different cultures of the world, letting them speak and speak out their own insights in their own languages. Some may wish even to reach communion, but this does not imply at all that the aim is a uniform unity or a reduction of all the pluralistic variety of Man into one single religion, system, ideology or tradition.<sup>16</sup>

I have briefly discussed several attitudes one can have toward the religions of others.<sup>17</sup> It must be noted, at this moment, that these attitudes are hierarchic matters of degrees. That is, the second is better than the first, the third than the second, and the fourth than the third. But this does not mean of course that all attempted dialogues must pass through each step. On the contrary, we can sensibly hope to reach the most desirable stage in our first few attempts, if we are sincere enough.

### SOME NECESSARY ASSUMPTIONS

In this section I will list and discuss five necessary assumptions we must postulate in order to have a genuine dialogue between religions. Now I am using the phrase "necessary assumption" in a Kantian sense. As you all know, Kant says that we cannot even sensibly talk about morality unless we postulate the existence of freedom, the

immortality of soul and the existence of God. In a similar way, we must have these sorts of "required assumptions" to postulate, or some rules to follow, if we are to engage in a genuine interreligious dialogue.

1. The first assumption is that *we should make no hasty value judgments*. For example, we wrongly believe that X is true just because it was spoken by Jesus or Buddha. But we should instead believe that X is true because it might have been spoken by Jesus or Buddha. It is like we should not believe some theory simply because it was held by Plato or Confucius. In other words, we should not confuse the problem of who said X with that of whether X is true. Otherwise, we commit the fallacy of *ad hominem* or the genetic fallacy. Furthermore, as I will explain later, it is a very difficult thing to claim to know other people's religions. And even if we assume we know their religions, the meeting between religions should be held on the same level, so to speak.

Therefore, what we need today is an open-mindedness and a generosity of faith if we are to avoid an extreme exclusivism. It is useful here to read Jaspers' comments on different sects of Christianity because it can also apply to different religions:

It is not permissible to define the common element as the essence of Christianity and on the basis of such a definition to judge what is Christian and what is not. From a historical point of view such definition can never be anything more than speculative ideal types of Christianity or dogmatic tenets on the strength of which particular churches or groups claim to be the sole repositories of Christianity, while all others are no better than heretics or heathen. Thus insofar as the Western World is Christian, this Christian element, when it is not usurped by limited groups from the Roman Catholic Church to the Protestant sects, can only be the Biblical religion, which encompasses all Christian faiths as well as the Jews and those who believe without a church and even in some way those who expressly abjure all faith. Biblical religion thus becomes the all-

embracing whole, reaching through the millennia from Abraham to our own day. No Westerner can disregard Christianity, but no one is entitled to claim it for his own possession.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, we should not make hasty value judgments on our own religions as well as other religions. We should not believe that only my religion has a generosity toward all other religions or more generosity than any other religion. This is why we should also reject an extreme inclusivism.

The most exclusive religions in the world are Christianity, Judaism and Islam, which claim that there is one and only one way to salvation. Perhaps this is why these religions more than any other religions have committed crimes in the long history of the world. There are many ways to go from here to the Lotte Hotel. Then why should there be only one way to truth? Religion without faith is a formalism, and religion without generosity is a fanaticism.

2. The second necessary assumption, is that *we should make no hasty distinctions*, say, between Eastern Mysticism and Western Rationalism, Chinese Continentalism and Japanese Islandism, Korean situation and American situation, etc. These distinctions are not as clear as we assume. This is why we also have to reject a general parallelism. Why? I can think of four reasons.

- a. A genuine meeting between religions should go beyond a comparison between systems, such as realism and nominalism, monism and dualism, spiritualism and materialism, intellectualism and intuitionism. For religion is a "total activity" including all these different modes of actions. No general conceptualizations alone can bring about a genuine dialogue as far as religions are concerned.<sup>19</sup>
- b. A genuine dialogue between religions should not ignore the difference between religions. George Santayana, for example, argues that religions can meet "by blurring or emptying the differences between them." I think this is a mistake. Of course, it is a desirable beginning, perhaps, to compare, on the same spirit, Christian

love with Buddhist compassion. But we should not forget or ignore the differences between these concepts. No oversimplifications can bring about a genuine dialogue.

- c. A genuine dialogue cannot be made by efforts to explain all different concepts of different religions by one concept of one religion. Thus we should not fancy that Taoistic Tao or Confucian humanity or Christian love can explain all religions. No fake generalizations can bring about a genuine dialogue.
- d. A genuine dialogue cannot be made, to use Raju's phrase, by "unhelpful comparisons." We all know that we can have many different conclusions from the same premises or the same conclusion from different premises. If we confuse this point, we make the "fallacy of the same premises" in the former and the "fallacy of the same conclusions" in the latter.

Let me give you an example: Both Mencius and Budha emphasize the importance of mind. Even Bishop Berkley, who said "to be is to be perceived," did the same thing. But we all know that the conclusions they drew are completely different from one another. In a similar way, we all know Nietzsche, Marx and Voltaire all denied the existence of God but the reasons for their denial are very different. Unless we know those reasons, we cannot claim to know their conclusions. (Aristotle said in the first chapter of his *Metaphysics* that to know is to know causes and principles.) Comparing two different concepts without knowing their real causes is only an unhelpful comparison. Such a comparison cannot bring about a genuine dialogue.

3. I said we should make no hasty value judgment and no hasty distinctions. What does that mean in practice? It means, I think, *we should recognize both similarities and differences of religions*, and this is my third necessary assumption.

As I mentioned before, all human beings have some anthropological similarities beyond space and time. But, it is equally true that all human beings have their own uniqueness. As Eliade said, every man is a cosmos. Or as

we ordinary say, every man has his own castle.

Emphasizing similarities alone will lead to an empty universalism which ignores all uniqueness in each religion. Emphasizing differences alone will lead to a narrow provincialism which ignores common factors of all religions. In other words, each religion has its own uniqueness, but this uniqueness should not be identified with absoluteness. Now we can draw one practical lesson from the fact that there are similarities as well as differences between religions. It is this. No one religion can become a model to unify all other religions or to re-explain or re-construct all other religions. For our goal in a dialogue is not a unity but an understanding, not a dominance but a development.

What we need is to recognize differences in similarities or similarities in differences (not in the Hegelian sense of course). For example, Albert Schweitzer asserted that Christianity is life and world affirming, whereas Indian religions are life and world negating. This has been sufficiently countered by Radhakrishna and other scholars. The mistake of Schweitzer was that he noticed the differences between Christianity and Indian religions, but did not see, or perhaps did not want to see, the similarities between them.

4. So far I have said that we have to reject both extreme exclusivism and extreme inclusivism, and then we must recognize both similarities and differences among different religions. Now I want to emphasize that these things are very difficult things, and this brings us to my third necessary assumption.

Now this seems to be common sense, but I think it is very important. We usually think that a genuine dialogue can be done by meeting other people or studying the dogmas of other religions. But *we must not forget that it is so difficult that perhaps it may not even be possible at all.* Unless we have such a humble attitude, we will achieve nothing.

All religions are, without exception, always absolute for all sincere religious people. Of course, they sometimes take their religions as a means for their living. But, ultimately, if they are sincere enough, they take their religion in an absolute sense. Furthermore, all religions request

an ultimate commitment of their followers. So it is, in a way, natural that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to know other religions. Actually, there are three stages we have to go through before we claim to know other religions:

- a. We have to study intellectually those doctrines, rituals, symbols, languages which are peculiar to that religion. Exactly how far we have to study, I do not know. But we have to know enough to have a religious discussion with the followers of that religion. And this will take more time perhaps than we might like to believe. This stage we may call a philosophical learning.
- b. We have to observe directly to some extent those doctrines, rituals, symbols, and languages. We should be able to identify those practical activities with the appropriate concept. For example, if one cannot understand the meaning of the Mass ceremony, then he is not in a position to talk about Catholicism. If one cannot understand actual Zen Meditation, then he is not in a position to talk about Zen Buddhism. This stage we may call a theological learning.
- c. But religion is more than a philosophical understanding and a theological knowledge. One must experience it himself, however superficial it may be. For example, it is a necessary condition to become a Korean Shaman to experience a state of ecstasy. And if one wants to be a master Shaman, she should be able to repeat that state of ecstasy whenever she wants. In a similar way, we must have some direct religious experience before we claim to know that religion, because a religion without experience is not a religion in the proper sense. This stage we may call a religious learning.

Of course, the three stages I have just mentioned are not always necessary, nor do we need to go through them in that order. However, this sufficiently illustrates, I think, the great difficulty involved in the knowledge we claim about religions other than our own. We usually think that we know other religions. But as Socrates said, we must humbly admit our ignorance of other religions if we really want to know and talk with them. This is why I think Tillich

wants us to be "an observing participant" rather than a simple participant and why Oxtoby argues that although there are many ways to understand other religions, all those ways must be based on "a mutual reformation by a participant and observer."<sup>20</sup>

5. Now I will mention the fifth and final necessary assumption. It is that *we must admit the very possibility for us to be converted to other religions*. If we are really open-minded and honestly acknowledge the similarities and differences between religions, in the due process of time, it is quite possible to come to believe that the religions of other people are somehow much better than mine in many ways. I do not mean, of course, that every comparative religionist should convert to other religions. But I sincerely mean that he must be willing to be converted, if necessary, and risk all the consequences. Unless we seriously entertain this sad thing, yes it is a sad possibility, we will not get a genuine dialogue. (Furthermore, I do not mean by conversion that we keep our exclusive attitude to accept one religion and reject all others while simply changing the object of our rejection and acceptance.)

Of course, conversion may not be the final point. As in the case of Thomas Merton, one can have more profound faith in his religion by learning more about other religions. Mohandas Gandhi was always proud of being a Hindu in his life, and yet did not want to be a representative of Hinduism alone. He was truly a religious cosmopolitan. For him there was no conflict between one religion and many religions. I take this to be a very important suggestion. I was born and raised in a Christian family. Suppose I became a Buddhist, which is possible, what would my mother say? She would cry all day and night. But I think we should entertain that possibility.

## CONCLUSION

I believe that a genuine interreligious dialogue is a necessity in this 20th century. On this belief, I have discussed several attitudes one may have toward other people's religions and then suggested several rules to follow in order to

engage in a serious and genuine dialogue.

Now I would like to emphasize, one more time, that religion is after all for human beings and "the study of religion is the study of persons." If religion has nothing to do with man, then there is no need for us to believe such a religion, nor to talk about it in the first place. It is important that Jesus is the son of God, but the more important thing is the fact that he *came down* to the world of sinful men. In a similar way, it is important that Buddha is an enlightened person, but the more important thing is that he *came back* to the world he had belonged to before.

Religion as such does not and should not exist. It has its values only insofar as it is related to human beings. In this sense, we can boldly say that "Brahman is Atman" or, more boldly, "Man is Heaven."<sup>21</sup> All religions are, in short, an activity for the benefit of human beings. This is the very point where all different religions can meet together.

Furthermore, I will emphasize again, no one religion can claim to possess all the truth. It is indeed misleading to say that only Jesus taught us the way to Heaven or that only Buddha taught us the way to Nirvana. The way to Heaven or Nirvana could have been taught either by Jesus or by Buddha, or, for that matter, by many other religious sages. This is why, I think, Jaspers argues that the passage in scripture, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," could *not* have been spoken by Jesus himself, but might have been inserted by some exclusive Christians in later periods.

Two more quotations from Tillich and Carrie Dunne will suffice to prove this point:

Early Christianity did not consider itself as a radical-exclusive, but as the all-inclusive religion in the sense of the saying: 'All that is true anywhere in the world belongs to us, the Christians.' And it is significant that the famous words of Jesus, 'You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (which was always an exegetic riddle), would, according to recent research, be better translated, 'You must be all-inclusive as your heavenly Father is all-inclusive.'<sup>22</sup>

Thus, from a Christian perspective I see Gotama Buddha as a precursor, preparing the way of the Lord. From a Buddhist perspective I see Jesus as a true successor of the Buddha.<sup>23</sup>

I would like to conclude my presentation by repeating what I said earlier. What we need today is an open-mindedness and a generosity of faith.<sup>24</sup>

Thank you very much.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Quoted from Jerome S. Brunner, *Toward a Theory of Instruction*, Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>M. Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, A Harvest Book, New York, 1959, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (1975), trans. by Young-hak Hyun, Ewha Women's University Press, 1980, pp. 61 & 63.

<sup>4</sup>P. Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1964, pp. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup>Socrates rhetorically asks Ion who believes himself to "deserve to be crowned with a wreath of gold by the Homerides" because he is more skilled in Homer than anybody else, although he is not in other poets such as Hesiod and Archilochus: "How is it, then, that you are skilled in Homer, but not in Hesiod or the other poets? Does Homer treat matters different from those that all the other poets treat? Wasn't his subject mainly war and hasn't he discussed the mutual relations of men, good and bad, or the general run as well as special craftsmen, the relations of the gods to one another and to men, as they forgather, the phenomena of the heavens and occurrences in the underworld, and the birth of gods and heroes? Are not these the subjects Homer dealt with in his poetry?" Plato, *Ion*, trans. by Lane Cooper, Princeton University Press, 1961, 530d-531d.

<sup>6</sup>Joachim Wach, "Introduction: The Meaning and Task of the History of Religions," *The History of Religions*, ed. by Joseph Kitagawa, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967, pp. 7-8.

<sup>7</sup>Tillich, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-36.

<sup>8</sup>Joachim Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religions*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1958, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup>Strictly speaking the fourth and fifth reasons apply to all areas of theology, religiology and philosophy of religion. For these three approaches to the study of religion, refer to Philip H. Hwang, ed. *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, 3rd ed. Chong-Ro Publishing Co., Seoul, 1981, pp. 277-281.

<sup>10</sup>Raimundo Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, Paulist Press New York, 1978, pp. xiv.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xv.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xvii.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xviii.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xix.

<sup>15</sup>William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature*, Macmillan, New York, 1961, p. 379.

<sup>16</sup>Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. xxvii.

<sup>17</sup>Tillich distinguishes three attitudes, namely, the position of "rejection of everything," that of "a partial rejection, together with a partial acceptance," and that of "a dialectical union of rejection and acceptance," and argues that the most desirable position is the last one. Tillich, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup>Karl Jaspers, *Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus*, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962, pp. 82-83.

<sup>19</sup>P.T. Raju, *Introduction to Comparative Philosophy*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1962, p. 292.

<sup>20</sup>W. C. Smith, "Comparative Religion: Whither—and Why," *Religious Diversity*, ed. by Willard G. Oxtoby, Harper & Row, New York, 1976, p. 142.

<sup>21</sup>This is a well-known slogan of Chondoism which was founded in Korea by Mr. Je-Woo Choi.

<sup>22</sup>Tillich, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>23</sup>Carrin Dunne, *Buddha and Jesus: Conversations*, Templegate, Springfield, Ill., 1975, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup>This is why I personally believe that a true theology is a comparative theology, a true religiology a comparative

religiology, and a true philosophy of religion a comparative philosophy of religion.

### III DISCUSSION

*DAVID KALUPAHANA:* Thank you Professor Hwang for a very thoughtful presentation. We will devote twenty minutes to discussion. If anyone has any questions or wants to make some comments on the presentation, please come up to the microphone, identify yourself and ask. Please make it brief.

*SPEAKER:* I am not a theologian. However I have a few questions. When I see an ecumenical movement like the Global Congress of the World's Religions, I see a problem. It is a serious problem. I come from South Africa. I grew up under the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa whose basis is Afrikaner Fundamentalist Calvinism. It says that there is absolutely nothing in common between whites and blacks. Now this last speaker was saying that we should be so liberal as not to condemn some of the religions. I am wondering in the case of some sectors of the Christian religion, such as the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, which denies divine dispensation for blacks, what should be the position of this Congress of the World's Religions? Are we to regard that kind of a church as part and parcel of the universal divine church?

Yesterday morning I was listening to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. He pointed out that we have some responsibility. We are to unite the white, the yellow, the black, and the brown, the upper classes, the middle classes, and the lower classes. So my point is how can we in a Congress such as this unite

the religions, some of which are fundamentally incompatible with the basic absolute value of Divine Justice, Divine Dispensation? Is this not a contradiction in terms? Thank you.

*DR. HWANG:* Is your question directed to my paper or the Global Congress of the World's Religions?

*SPEAKER:* Some aspects you did mention. For example, we should not be judgmental about some religions and we should be...

*DR. HWANG:* I am not in a position to defend or criticize the GCWR, so I have nothing to say about it. As far as my personal opinions are concerned, I take it to be a very unfortunate thing if the fact you discuss is in fact true in Africa. Why such a thing happens I really do not know. I am not familiar with that area and frankly I am not in a position to make any comment about it. If you care about the position of this Congress, you are welcome to ask.

*SPEAKER:* No—that is for me a theoretical premise. You mentioned Christianity and Buddhism and Islam. In a general sense I am saying that there are particular species under the genus of World Religions. Some of these species are highly incompatible with the basic values of what we know religion to be.

*DR. HWANG:* Are you saying that one of those species has *nothing* in common with any other religion in the whole world? Is that what you are saying?

*SPEAKER:* Yes! I am absolutely saying that. If we understand religion and hear the point of religion as an issue of taking care of human problems—if we understand religion to mean that—I am saying that there is a particular species of religion which denies that. Certain people who have been created by God...

*DR. HWANG:* Due to my ignorance of the particular religion to which you refer, I cannot say anything about it. I have studied Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and others. I found many similarities as well as differences.

**JOHN MEAGHER:** This point relates to the last speaker's point as well. My name is John Meagher. I'm from Toronto, Canada. In what is generally I thought a very thoughtful and often wise paper, there are a few things to which I would take exception. I would like to suggest simply one on this occasion. You say that no religion can remain at its early stages—it must mature and meet other religions in a dynamic fashion.

With respect to both the time span and the sense of growth, I have some difficulty. This statement suggests that in a rather unoriental way you are thinking like a Westerner when you talk about early stages. All the religions we know are in their early stages. I take it that your "must" is a moral injunction rather than a definition of inescapable process. I would like to suggest that all the religions we know are not only in their early stages, but that it is not requisite for them to mature and that one of the great difficulties is precisely that out of loyalty to what they have been they often arrest their own progress and remain in a state of early adolescence. I am not sure that it is really sound if we are going to enter into religious dialogue to think in any other way than that we don't know what religious maturity is, we have no model of religious maturity in the history of the world, and the dialogue will be most fruitful if we understand that the process of becoming mature or at least more mature is not from a basic stage of maturity but from an early adolescence or at best perhaps a childhood stage. The process itself will take place only if we recognize that we are probably in still rather primitive conditions and need the insight, criticism help, and example of one another in order to get out of our early stages bit by bit and gather the maturity that does not yet exist and can be avoided as things now proceed.

**DR. HWANG:** I think your question is well taken. Perhaps I should not use the words *maturity*, *progress* and so forth. I mentioned in passing that I am not an Hegelian. I do not believe in inevitable progress or development of any religion. The words I was using were probably unfortunate. I wanted to emphasize the fact that religion must change one way or another to the state of maturity from immaturity.

Your advice is well taken. I furthermore believe that if anyone claims that this is the mature state of his religion, that I think he is under an illusion. Thank you.

*DR. GOPAL S. PURI:* Sisters and brothers, this is the message of my religion—the Sikh religion—the youngest of all the world religions, only 500 years old. It began in India and believes in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. To my mind that religion is in itself a dialogue between Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Eastern and Western religions. It has brought out the glowing facts—God is truth, God is light, God is love, God is a lover of mankind. I have yet to find any religion which does not emphasize in these words that God is truth, God is love, God is light. Therefore we start the dialogue where we are all similar. We start from the similarities which we all agree. Is there any religion here which does not believe that God is love, then probably we exclude that religion. From this bridge of understanding we go on developing further similarities. In gathering wheat, you take the grains—you don't want all the chaff. My prayer for you, sisters and brothers, is that we start with the assumption that we are all children of one God. That light shines in every one of us. The only question is how we can keep it aloft so that everybody else can see it. Thank you very much.

*DR. HWANG:* Thank *you* very much. I would like to make a few comments. First, we should be very careful in using the word "God." Second, you may recall, I rejected general parallelisms. I am not saying that it is a bad method, but that this method is not the most desirable one. Third, your religion is definitely not the youngest. There are religions which are much younger than yours.

*ALI SHARMAR:* I am Ali Sharmar from Benares, India. I would first of all like to express my appreciation for your wonderful paper. This expresses the true spirit of religion. I have a small doubt that has been created by the last comment in your conclusion. You said that the statement of Christ that I am the truth, I am the light, has been inserted by some later Christians. Now this raises some confusion

in my mind because this is the main—the central spirit of any religion—even a religion which is more tolerant than many religions like Hinduism.

Unless the guru—the leader or the divine incarnation gives this kind of assurance, that he will lead you to the true part—the final goal—the average man will not follow him. The goals will always be in doubt or uncertainty and varying, unless the religious leader assures the followers that his is the final truth. That does not mean exclusivism but unless there were a different kind of attitude, a different kind of temperament, why would they follow different religions? But my religion, my leader says—and that is final for me. So I think your statement that this has been inserted later on—that is not correct—it must be the real thing or Christ himself in that context.

*DR. HWANG:* I am not a biblical scholar. I do not know the authenticity of the claim Jaspers made. The reason I quoted that passage is to show with some sort of force that even if, as you just mentioned, there must be an absolute truth, this does not necessarily lead to the exclusion of any other religion. That is why I quoted that passage. Whether the passage is authentic, I frankly do not know. But your comment is well taken.

*PETER WILHELM BOCKMAN:* I am Professor Bockman, Professor of Religion at the University of Trondheim, Norway. I would like first of all to thank the speaker for his very well written paper. I am glad to hear that my old teacher Paul Tillich is still alive in some quarters. I find in your paper two assumptions which you have not clearly mentioned. However, they run throughout all of your paper. They are brought out but without proper foundation. They are in the concluding part. Those two assumptions for your presentation seem to be:

All religions are in short an activity for the benefit of human beings.

No one religion can claim to possess all the truth.

What are your reasons for these two assumptions? I can't say that I see that you have validated those two assumptions. Do they have any foundation or are they

assumptions in an axiomatic fashion in which case they are just another belief—the belief to end all beliefs.

*DR. HWANG:* I definitely do not want to be axiomatic or to claim that it is true by definition. You are right about the first assumption you mentioned. I did not elaborate and I did not state any reasons. I just mentioned it in passing. But I think it is common sense. Christians believe that Jesus is the son of God. But suppose that he is only up in heaven, and he has nothing to do with human beings. What are you going to say about him? Why should we talk about him? Or take Buddha as the enlightened one. As you may know, when Buddha was enlightened, he hesitated on whether he would come back to the world or not. He was afraid that people would not understand him. He hesitated for a long period of time, but out of compassion he decided he had to come back. Now, this is what I call the origins of religion for the benefit of human beings. For the second assumption, you mention, that no one religion can claim to possess all the truth, I would like to say a few words. The fact is that there are many religions. We have all sorts of religions. We cannot ignore this simple fact. This is why, I think, William James argues for the multiplicity of religions and the varieties of religious experiences even within one religious system. My overall paper sufficiently shows that no one religion can possess all the truth. However we can discuss it later.

*DR. GORDON MELTON:* I think we left too quickly the concern raised by the brother at the beginning of the discussion period. What he raises for us as people who are involved in the Global Congress is a very vital question as to how we shall approach religious groups that one or the other of us might consider as having a wrong idea and a wrong position. That is not just a religious difference but a matter of morality. It is not a unique position. The Dutch Church in South Africa has been rightly condemned for their stand on racial issues. This is not unique by any means. I know some Roman Catholic theologians for example who have the same opinion about half the human race as the Dutch Church has about Blacks. They are not really

happy that women exist and would rather that they all be men. One prominent Roman Catholic theologian would be very thankful if those women who believe in Christ would at least have their sex changed so that they can go to heaven when they die as a part of the salvation process.

The problem I think is one that we are all somewhat imperfect, more or less. It is not that we should exclude one group because we feel their position on any one issue is abhorrent and wrong. We should invite them all into dialogue because when we are in dialogue as you mentioned we stand a chance of conversion. We risk ourselves. I think it would be much better to have them in dialogue with the hope of transformation than to exclude them to begin with and push them out of the realms of change.

*DR. HWANG:* I take that as a comment to the previous comment.

*SPEAKER:* Only a short comment. I thank you for your answer which one certainly could also gather from your paper. However, you must be aware that those two assumptions of yours are not uncontested, and not absolutely delivered to you from common sense.

For instance, John Calvin—as you certainly know—would vehemently contest that religion is an activity for the benefit of human beings. He would say that religion is an activity of the glory of God. And certainly Karl Barth would agree with him very vehemently on that point.

*DR. HWANG:* Particularly the early part of Karl Barth.

*SPEAKER:* Your other assumption is that no one religion can claim to possess all the truth. There is the possibility, possibility, of course, despite the empirical test of a number of religions in the world—this does not prove that there is no one religion which has the truth.

*DR. HWANG:* I know these two assumptions are contested. There are many people who say the opposite of what I said. I know that.

*JOHN MEAGHER:* Just for the sake of a balanced understanding I would like to add briefly with respect to

the speaker before last that there are several Roman Catholic theologians who are utterly delighted about the existence of women. Some of them are women but not all of them are women.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Thank you very much Professor Hwang. I want to leave a few minutes for one of the members of the board of trustees who has expressed an interest in saying something about, or answering the question, that was raised at the very beginning as to what the Global Congress can do or wishes to do about what is going on in South Africa.

*DR. SESHAGIRI RAO:* I think the question that was raised is quite in order and raised in a very articulate way. I also think that the GCWR's attitude to that question should be, in respect to the treatment of Blacks in South Africa, if that is the position of the Dutch Church, in that respect it is wrong—100% wrong. But I am not going to say that is all that that church teaches. There might be many other things. There are certainly some distortions in the history of different religious traditions. Religion is exploited for political purpose. We should certainly condemn those exploitations, the misuses and abuses of religion. But we should not throw away the baby along with the bath water. We should try to keep the baby and only straighten out those discussions. In that sense I do not think we can say Marxism or Hitler was the product of Christianity. There are discussions in history like that. What I am trying to say is the institution—the GCWR—should take the position, and I think it takes the position, that if this is the attitude and we know at least by the papers that that is the attitude, that is to be condemned. Thank you.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* We come now to the next item of the business for today. We have during the last couple of months had two meetings which we call Regional Consultations. We hold these in order to consult with people in the different parts of the world regarding the ideals set up by the Global Congress. One of the meetings was held in Africa. This was the Inauguration of the African Institute.

The other was held in Sri Lanka. We thought it our duty to inform the members of the Global Congress and also those who are interested in the Global Congress what took place at these two meetings. So now I will call upon Professor John Sodipo, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Ife in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, to give us a presentation about the inauguration of the African Institute.

*PROFESSOR JOHN A. SODIPO:* Mr. Chairman, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. I must say that the reason I am making this presentation is that both Francis Botchway, President of the African Institute for the Study of Human Values, and Dr. Kwame Gyekye, the Vice President, are absent from this ICUS meeting. All the officers who know more about the details and the problems of the Institute are also absent and that is the reason why I have been asked to make this presentation.

The Institute was formally inaugurated on August 21, 1981 in Accra, Ghana. The Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. J.W.D. de Graft-Johnson, presented the inaugural address on behalf of the President of the Republic, Dr. Hills Limann. The choir of the Ghana Radio Corporation made the atmosphere pleasant and melodious by presenting traditional and modern songs of Ghana.

One Ghanaian who has made his mark in public affairs both in Ghana and on the international scene, was chairman. I think he was presenting the sentiments of many of those present when he confessed his own initial skepticism about the Institute. This skepticism was later dissolved when he heard the seriousness of purpose and the realism of the intentions of those who were behind the Institute.

The Vice President of the Republic gave a very very thoughtful and confidence inspiring speech. Some of you would have seen the newsletter of the GCWR of November 1981. In that newsletter, some attention was paid to the inauguration which took place in Ghana.

Personally I think that anybody who has any concern for Africa, whether he is African or not, and for the role Africa can play in world affairs, cannot but be inspired by the sentiments with which the founders of the institute

started. I want to quote briefly from that statement.

The crucial responsibility of African scholars is to provide a sound philosophical base for the value that will harness the intellectual and moral resources of the African people for the important task of building renascent Africa.

This is the task and it is to this then that all the African intellectual resources must be summoned to pave the way for a free and unfettered expression of the created genius of the African people.

Out of this creative enterprise will emerge values and norms which are rooted in the experience of the African. It is to this end that the African Institute for the Study of Human Values has been established.

These are very very lofty sentiments and therefore most of those who were present at the inauguration justifiably praised and appreciated the efforts of both Dr. Botchway and Dr. Gyekye. But a more important aspect of the inauguration in my opinion was the symposium that followed the next day. At that symposium, Dr. Kurt Johnson presented what roughly could be entitled the Unification Interpretation of African Religion and the way in which that could contribute to a global religious understanding. One Anglican priest, very charming and very powerful, presented a solemn view of how some missionary churches have misrepresented or misinterpreted African family life, and so on, and made recommendations as to ways in which these missionary activities could be more effective by a deeper understanding of the African way of life. This part concerns the ideals of the Institute.

Now, on the one hand, a statement of ideals is one thing and the efforts toward realization is another thing. I don't know whether this is a proper forum for these observations. As I pointed out, I was in a sense an observer at this inauguration. I wasn't an official. But I do want to make some comments. The comments are these: Since this is called an African Institute, if it is to achieve its end, I think the participation both of the directorate, the management, and the grass root participant level must be more widely African based. For instance, apart from

Dr. Nyangoni, who is an officer of the Institute, I was the only African scholar present from outside Ghana itself. I think that was unfortunate. If the Institute is genuinely African, I think its participation should be more widely based. The second point is this—that although the officials of the International Cultural Foundation kept humbly in the background, it was clear that their monetary resources were indispensable to the success of the inauguration. Now this is all right. But in our opinion the time has passed when projects which could be done, properly, successfully, on the basis of African resources should be instituted without African support. I do not see anything actually in the African Institute which prevents this from being fully supported by African sources. This is not to say that help from outside is not welcome in such institutes like this. But as I pointed out at the inauguration, it is a fact that the world has no respect for beggars. Therefore, while support from outside should be welcomed, I think it would be unfortunate if we see the Institute as just a means of going about the world asking support.

Finally, I want to say that I do not think material wealth or technological power are a justifiable basis for formulating moral categories by which peoples of the world could be pigeonholed into superior, middle, and lower categories. That is why I say in respect to the African Institute that scholars, or leaders, intellectual, cultural and political should devote their energies to maintaining the self respect, self-esteem, and dignity of African nations and the African continent. Thank you very much.

*DR. KALUPUHANA:* Thank you Professor Sodipo. Next we present a report on the meetings of the Global Congress held in Colombo and Kandy in Sri Lanka. I was myself present, but I thought it is more appropriate that that report be presented by the person who is really responsible for organizing that meeting—one of our trustees, Professor Padmasiri de Silva—from the University of Sri Lanka.

*PADMASIRI de SILVA:* Mr. Chairman, Venerable Sirs, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasant duty to report to

you or present to you an account of the two regional meetings we had in Sri Lanka. I think one year back when we met, we organized this GCWR under the title, "Towards a Global Congress of World Religions." Today we meet under the title "The Global Congress of the World's Religions," which means it has ceased to be a vision. It is now a reality. This makes it very necessary that apart from the grand design of the Global Congress of the World Religions, we have a more solid base in the way of regional meetings. In this way, I think organizing regional meetings at what might be called grass roots levels, is extremely important. Professor Hwang in his analysis of the functions of religious dialogue, used a phrase, "Religion without Experience." If dialogue becomes just an academic exercise then it becomes "religion without experience." It is very necessary that we bring in data of actual living traditions. We need to know what really takes place in real dialogue. It is only when we have these basic data that we can talk realistically. Without the data, our conversation becomes a kind of abstract discussion about religious dialogue. I am not commenting here on the logical dialogue. I am presenting to you a descriptive report of what really happened at an experimental interreligious dialogue in Sri Lanka.

Regional meetings have several important functions:

1. They provide a very good base or basis for organizing a GCWR.
2. They provide examples of what kinds of things can be done.
3. They furnish us with real data as to what happens in interreligious dialogue.
4. They help us discover talent, people who will join us in time to come.

In these and other ways, I think regional meetings have very important functions in themselves as well as supporting the grand design of a GCWR. This is my introduction to this report.

## CONFERENCES IN SRI LANKA

In the first part of this report an attempt will be made to give a brief descriptive account of the two meetings we had—one in Colombo and the other in Kandy. In the second part of this account, some attempt will be made to briefly sum up the findings of these two meetings and to consider any insights we can gain from the results of these experiments. The meetings were in fact a miniature expression of the art of multi-religious interaction. Sri Lanka offers a significant context where adherents of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Bahai and Buddhism live together.

The first meeting of the GCWR in Sri Lanka was held on the 14th of August 1981 in Colombo at the Hotel Lanka Oberoi. We were a small group of twenty to twenty-five participants mainly from the Colombo area. We represented diverse professional and academic interests as well as various religions. This was a one-day conference which started about 9 AM with registration and informal introductions. We finished about 2 PM with lunch. This was the ceremonial inauguration of the GCWR in Sri Lanka. David Kalupahana, President of Communications, represented this parent organization. The session was begun by Dr. de Silva who welcomed the participants. Dr. Kalupahana outlined the goals and objectives of the GCWR. This was followed by a discussion seeking points of clarification. He presented the history of the GCWR as well as its ideas. He emphasized the fact that the GCWR was not a new religion but an association of religiously motivated persons. There was a short discussion of the facets of multi-religious interaction. After a short break for tea there was a special session on "Professional Ethics in a Changing World." This was a kind of experiment to use the great potential of interreligious dialogue to discuss issues of significance in the contemporary world. In fact, both meetings in Colombo and Kandy were designed to bring together people interested in interreligious understanding and a major profession concerned for a code of ethics. Padmasiri de Silva, as convener, opened the session with a paper on "Professional Ethics in a Changing World." He contended that we need to make a response to this change, from a

value oriented basis which should be both religious and professional. He outlined a number of levels at which professional ethics may be discussed. There is a provisional ethic which may be applied in broad outline to all professions. There is a professional ethics peculiar to each profession. In establishing principles of conduct we move in two directions. One of these is the routine question of the dynamics of decision making. There is also the more philosophical value oriented basis of large co-values. These give us the criteria which are necessary for the process of decision making. It is at the latter level that religious or humanistic values become important. Medical ethics is one example of professional ethics. Medical ethics, compared with other areas of professional ethics, have developed at crisis points where problems of value come in and people find it extremely difficult to make decisions. It is at this point that a blank, empty vacuous code of science does not help us. It is at this point that sometimes as a scientist and as a person belonging to a particular religion, a person can have conflicts.

There was a panel discussion with medical ethics presented by Dr. Felix Fernando, physician. Facets of commercial law were presented by Mr. K. Selvaratman. The Association of Professional Associates were represented by an engineer, Mr. W.B.A. Jayasekera. Dr. Jotiya Dhirasekera functioned as the moderator. There was a stimulating discussion where the relevant religious perspectives were presented by participants.

The final phase of the meeting was devoted to questions about where do we go from here. Here again, Dr. Kalupahana presented some possibilities for the future. We decided to wait for this meeting in Seoul to plan the future organization for our group. Though it was the ceremonial inauguration of the GCWR in Sri Lanka, it was a lively, productive meeting in which very cordial and warm sentiments were expressed by the participants. David will agree with me that we certainly made a very good start.

The second part of my report is on the Kandy meeting. This followed the Colombo meeting. It did not have the ceremonial glamour and color of the first meeting, but

was rather a workshop. It coincided with the visit of Queen Elizabeth of England too so it is a day we cannot forget.

The meeting in Kandy: The second meeting of the GCWR was in Kandy on Saturday, October 24, 1981. The conference was inaugurated by the lighting of the lamps by four representatives of four major religions. The Kandy meeting had two main sessions. The first session was on types of contexts in which the fact of religious plurality becomes important. This session was chaired by Dr. E.P. Fernando of the Peradeniya University dental faculty. A guiding paper was presented by de Silva as the convener of the GCWR. The second session was on medical ethics. It was chaired by Professor Samuel of the Engineering Faculty. The main paper was presented by Dr. Philip Fernando who incidentally is here attending this conference in Korea.

What are the types of contexts in which the factor of religious plurality becomes important?

1. We have to live with and respect people of other religions.
2. We have to study and understand the teachings of other religions.
3. Each of us has a deep commitment to search for truth and happiness unfettered by neighbors.
4. We have to work together in common frontiers, like problems of discrimination, poverty, social injustice, immorality, etc.

How can religions pool resources together to solve these problems?

We searched also for the validity which each religion accords to other religions. The continuing discussion was polarized in an interesting search for some co-values on whether they are co-values which are common to all the religions. It appears that two interesting co-values emerged out of the discussion:

1. Compassion or love and
2. Truthfulness.

Now these are not merely co-values but together they offer a broad base for dealing with the turmoils of a chang-

ing world and the conflicts of our time. They also offer a vital base for the development of a viable professional ethics, one of the main subjects of discussion.

Out of the diverse methodologies cited by Dr. de Silva, the participants, especially the Christians, thought that to get a feel for the other person's religion was an important component in multi-religious communication. It is then that a greater degree of refinement and a greater degree of sensitivity in the art of living together is possible.

The forum on medical ethics was a good example of a very focused discussion. Sometimes interreligious discussions can be diffused in a loosely structured inquiry. Problem-oriented discussion is a good corrective to this. Dr. Fernando, in introducing the subject, commented that a veritable avalanche of new discoveries and highly defined techniques in medicine has made both medical care and research enormously sophisticated areas of activity. Here ethical choices of many kinds are coming to the forefront. He presented an example of the issues in taking up the question of abortion. He outlined theories on abortion, such as abortion on demand, therapeutic abortion and anti-abortionist views. He discussed the Christian point of view and also the response from Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim viewpoints.

After a short discussion of plans and themes for the future, the chairman of the session thanked the GCWR and the Unification Theological Seminary on behalf of the participants. The convener thanked the participants and promised to present a summary of this discussion at the general meeting. I shall conclude by drawing a few lessons or insights from this kind of experiment. It is very necessary that we have some real data on what is really going on at the local level in interreligious dialogue.

From this small experiment that we had, I draw two or three insights.

1. The meeting conveyed to us the importance of a solid regional base for the GCWR, before the grand design of the Global Congress emerges.
2. We need to sharpen our methods of communication in multi-religious discussion in order to create a greater

base for the communication of ideas. We can even use poetry and music. When we want to communicate religious ideas we are not limited to statements or logic. There are various forms of communication. I think it is an important problem in interreligious dialogue.

3. The value of problem-oriented discussion is definitely shown in this discussion that we had.

In fact, the first and the third points came out as well in the report of the meeting of Board members which was held on the third, seventh, and tenth of August in 1981. Ninian Smart said, "Developing the GCWR in a catalytic role may be realistic. We might function better in this way with various regional and specialized programs than with a grand design that requires massive institutionalizing." Anne Bancroft spoke of a topical approach as a model for interreligious discussion with a focus on special problems. Thus at the regional level, if we set some target to achieve, some problem to discuss, etc., we can perform a useful function. In addition, it helps us to get a few more people from the local scene to the main GCWR meeting.

To sum up: local conferences have their limitations but this was a useful experiment. We are also conscious of the need to break new ground in interreligious meetings. Though we have tentative plans for the future this would not be the context in which to discuss these issues. I conclude this report by thanking the Unification Theological Seminary as well as the main organization of the GCWR and all the others who helped us. I want to give a special word of thanks to David Kalupahana for steering our way from distant Hawaii. Thank you.

*DAVID KALUPAHANA:* I am sure some of the members of the Board of Trustees who were not present at those regional conferences and some of the people present here would want to ask additional questions about what went on.

*SPEAKER:* Why weren't people of different religious backgrounds brought together?

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* You were probably not listening

to him. As he reported at the Sri Lanka meeting we had several major religions represented. We had a number of Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindus. I was very happy to see one of the leading Bahai theoreticians accepting our invitation, coming to the meeting, and taking active participation. We had a variety of groups represented at the meetings.

*DR. OSBORN SCOTT:* May I ask a question? I think at our meeting in Boston we discussed the possibilities of making contact with other religious leaders of major religious organizations. I think at that meeting it was also proposed that that would be considered as a part of the program of the Global Congress of the World's Religions. It is a very formidable task, bringing groups together. It might be that at this early stage we could serve as the catalyst for stimulating the thinking, or the movement of other major religious groups. I am just wondering whether or not some of these findings, some of these discussions, have been circulated say to leaders of major religious groups—the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the Buddhist Council and so forth. This could be a means of finding an area where we can bring together the various religions of the world. I think we are doing something—you are saying something but who is hearing it? And are we trying to disseminate this information broadly?

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Well, I guess I should pass the mike to the secretary, Dr. Thompson, to answer that question. He is really the one who is at the helm, driving the vehicle.

*DR. THOMPSON:* I am not sure I can answer it. But I appreciate it, Dr. Scott, that you raise the issue. Many of you have perhaps already seen the newsletter which was printed at the Unification Theological Seminary. It was put together by students there based on reports from the field. Obviously this is one vehicle through which we can communicate what has been going on to a wider audience. Copies of that can be sent to such places as the National Council of Churches in America, the World Council of Churches, and other national groups as well as groups in Buddhism and Islam. Yes, some of this can be communicated. Whether

they will read it or not, I honestly do not know. But I think we can all appreciate the reminder that was part of our earlier discussion. We really need to follow through and communicate with others.

As follow-up to my earlier introduction to the Board of Trustees: at that time, Dr. Isma'il al Faruqi was not here. We also have here several people who have been actively involved in the development of the Global Congress over these several years. These include Jim Kodera, Anne Bancroft, President David Kim, President of the Unification Theological Seminary, and Dr. Gordon Melton who spoke a few moments ago, and numbers of others who have attended earlier meetings.

For those of you who are new here, I hope that you understand that we are actively seeking your help and support. If you can help us in any way be sure to contact Dr. Kalupahana, or any member of the Board of Trustees, or any of the others who have been actively involved for several years now. Let us know of your interest so that we can be in touch and receive your help and your support. Part of what the Global Congress is all about is a bringing together of people of varieties of religion. You heard this in terms of the meeting at Sri Lanka. Our concern is dialogue. Our concern is to help study and deal with some of the problems of the world. One of these was raised earlier in terms of the racism with which I myself have a great deal of difficulty. I have difficulty with my own Christian faith for a number of reasons. I myself have not yet come up to the level of the teaching of the Founder of my faith.

We have right here tonight a variety of religions represented in terms of Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, various branches of Christianity, Buddhism, and African traditions. Geographically we are here in terms of North and South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. So we are here, a mini Global Congress already. That part I appreciate and I invite you all to come back again tomorrow night to hear more of the work of the Global Congress. Dr. Kalupahana will report from the Trustees. Come to hear from our speakers tomorrow—Representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We will meet here again tomorrow night at 8 PM. Thank you for coming.

**IV**  
**PUBLIC MEETING**  
**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1981**  
**REPORTS AND OPENING REMARKS**

*HENRY O. THOMPSON:* Good Evening. Welcome to the second evening of the Global Congress of the World's Religions meeting in Seoul, Korea. I am Hank Thompson, Dr. Henry O. Thompson, Secretary to the Board of Trustees. Our Secretary of the Board of Trustees is Archie Bahm sitting here in the second row. We have David Kalupahana, President for Communications, here on my right. Several other Trustees, Dr. Seshagiri Rao, and Dr. Padmasiri de Silva are here.

We continually seek the support and help of people who are interested in the work of the GCWR. If you are interested in helping with the work in your own area or wherever you happen to be, would you contact one of us and let us know. We want to have your name and address so we can be in touch with you. Dr. Kalupahana of the University of Hawaii will take a few minutes to share deliberations of the Board of Trustees.

*DAVID KALUPAHANA:* Welcome once again to the GCWR. We have been giving reports at each annual meeting since the idea of a Global Congress was initiated in 1977.

We inaugurated the GCWR in Miami Beach last year. We have a Board of Trustees of eleven members, including three Presidents. We have had several discussions during this period on various topics relating to interreligious

dialogue, centered on various geographical areas. At the last meeting in Miami, it was decided that we need to have regional consultations in many parts of the world. We are considering Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Japan, Pakistan, India and the United States.

You heard last evening of the inauguration of the African Institute for the Study of Human Values. Dr. John Sodipo reported on behalf of Dr. Francis Botchway, the President of the Institute. Dr. Botchway is a trustee of the GCWR. He has discussed the possibilities of having such an Institute in previous sessions of the GCWR. We would like to think of the GCWR as playing a part in the establishment of this Institute. Congratulations to President Botchway, Vice-President Gyekye, Dr. Sodipo, and all others who have had a part in its foundation.

We were planning to have a meeting in New Delhi, India. Unfortunately, we were not able to arrange this meeting. Plans are now under way for meeting in Varanasi and Mysore. But in the meanwhile, we had a small meeting in a rather insignificant place called Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon.<sup>1</sup> That meeting turned out to be a great success, as you heard last night. I would like to add that in Sri Lanka, various religious traditions exist, like Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Bahai. We also have two major ethnic groups, Sinhalese and Tamils. Conflicts between these two ethnic groups have been going on for more than 2000 years. Our August GCWR meeting called for religious harmony. Immediately after this was reported in the local newspapers, one of the leaders of the government called for religious harmony among the Tamils and the Sinhalese, something that has never been brought up during these many centuries. The conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils has been thought of as conflicts between linguistic groups.<sup>2</sup> We never thought of religious harmony as the foundation for harmony of the two ethnic groups. I believe that the reason this has been emphasized now is that we who are crying for religious harmony in the world happened to be present at that place. Those people who are in political power heard our cry. That is my suspicion, at least. I think that was a concrete result that

we achieved through the Global Congress.

In January, Dr. Isma'il al Faruqi hopes to have a meeting in Islamabad (see the report later in this text). We will probably have another meeting in Europe though I am not quite sure when.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime we also plan to have a series of discussion groups. Some have suggested that we should have one in South America. Some have suggested that we should have more consultation groups in North America. We may be able to have a meeting in Japan this Fall.<sup>4</sup> We also hope to have a meeting in Hawaii, perhaps in the summer of 1983. We believe that by doing these things, we will be able to convince people that it is high time for us to get together and have dialogue. We want to understand each other's religious beliefs and see whether there is a way in which we can live in peace and harmony.

We are grateful to the International Cultural Foundation of the Unification Church and the Unification Theological Seminary of the Unification Church for lending us support to the extent that they have done. In the few meetings of the GCWR which we have had we have not been able to hear from all of the religions of the world. There is one religion that was very prominent in one part of the world. This area has been completely submerged by foreign invasions. A certain country was completely wiped off of the map. The people are without roots now. It is a group of people that preserved a very valuable spiritual tradition. They were thrown all over the world without a homeland. We thought it was appropriate for us to give an opportunity to this religious tradition to present itself—present its ideas before the Global Congress. In March this year I sent an invitation to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, inviting him to be present at this session of the GCWR.

In the meantime, Dr. Anne Bancroft, one of our very enthusiastic workers, had an audience with the Dalai Lama. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama himself, could not be present. However he was willing to send a delegation who could explain to us the religious traditions that he represents as well as the attitude that he holds towards a dialogue with other religious traditions. We are indeed fortunate that we have representatives of His Holiness, the

Dalai Lama with us tonight.

We have here with us Mr. Pema Gyalpo Gyari who is the liaison officer for His Holiness, the Dalai Lama for South and Northeast Asia. He left Tibet in 1959. He attended school in Tokyo and graduated from Asia University in Tokyo with an LL. B. degree. He studied at Sophia University in Tokyo and at the Tokyo Institute of Foreign Languages. He was a Research Fellow there and subsequently functioned as a guest lecturer at the Asian Studies Institute of Asia University. He is now the Managing Director of the Tibet Cultural Center in Tokyo. In May–August, 1980, he was a member of the second fact finding delegation of His Holiness to Tibet. This was lead by Mr. Tenzin N. Tethong, the Representative for North America, who is with us tonight. Mr. Tethong is the former editor of the journal *Sheja* (in Tibetan) and the *Tibetan Review* (in English), both published in India. He worked with the Council of Tibetan Education for many years. In addition we are really fortunate in having a very distinguished Lama representing the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He is the Venerable Geshe Tenpa Gyaltzen, who is seated next to me. He is a monk scholar from Drepung Monastery. It was the largest monastic university in Tibet.<sup>5</sup> He received the Acharya Degree from Benares Sanskrit University. Presently he is a Research Fellow at the Tokyo Bunko Library in Tokyo. He is an adviser and religious instructor at the Tibetan Cultural Center in Tokyo. He will speak later.

At this time, I present to you Mr. Pema Gyalpo.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Editor's note: The audience "caught" Dr. Kalupahana's quiet humor in the word "insignificant." He is from Sri Lanka, the "Pearl of the Indian Ocean," an incredibly beautiful island east of the southern tip of India. Its beauty is reflected in its ancient name, which means "Resplendant Island." Its ancient name is Taprobane. The origin of "Ceylon" is uncertain. It may simply be a slurring of Sri Lanka. Out of its 14 million people about 72% are Theravada Buddhist Sinhalese (also spelled Singhalese) and 20.5% are Hindu Tamils. There are also Muslim Moors, descendants of Dutch and Portugese colonists and Eurasians. There are still several thousand Veddas, the original inhabitants, who were conquered in the sixth century B.C.E. by the Sinhalese from northern India. This conquest may be reflected in the Hindu epic, the Ramayana. Buddhism was introduced during the reign of Devanampiya Tissa (307-267 B.C.E.) by the daughter and son of the Mauryan Emperor Asoka. Arab traders arrived in the 10th century, the Portugese in the early 16th, the Dutch in the mid-17th and the British in 1795. Ceylon is on the sea routes to southeast Asia and the East Indies. It became an independent nation February 4, 1948, with dominion status in the British Commonwealth. In 1972, Ceylon became Sri Lanka and a Republic. *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* (hereafter NCE); NY: Columbia University Press, 1975, p. 2603. Young Oon Kim, *World Religions*, Vol. 2; NY: Golden Gate Publishing Co., 1976. Tissa Fernando and Robert N. Kearney, eds., *Modern Sri Lanka*; Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1979. K.M. deSilva, *Sri Lanka*; Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1977. Hans J. Aubert and Ulf E. Müller, *Sri Lanka Ceylon: Perle des Indischen Ozeans*; München: BLV Verlags-gesellschaft, 1974. Basil L.C. Johnson and M. LeM. Scrivenor, *Sri Lanka: Land, People and Economy*; London: Heineman Educational Books, 1981.

<sup>2</sup>"Sinhalese" is an Indic language of the Indo-Iranian section of

the Indo-European language group. Tamil, a language spoken by some 40 million people, is one of the four major languages of the Dravidian group. Dravidian may have been the pre-Aryan language of India. Today, these 20 languages are spoken mostly in central and southern India, and northern Sri Lanka. Sinhalese is spoken primarily in Sri Lanka. NCE—2525, 1332-1333, 794. Fernando and Kearney, op. cit., pp. 5-7.

<sup>3</sup>A GCWR meeting was held in Bristol, England in 1978. See pp. 203-297 in *Towards a Global Congress of World Religions* ed. Warren Lewis; Barrytown, NY: Unification Theological Seminary, 1978.

<sup>4</sup>As we go to press, this has been changed to the Spring, 1983.

<sup>5</sup>Drepung monastery outside the capital city of Lhasa was built in 1416 A.D. Before the Chinese occupation in 1951, Drepung had over 10,000 monks. Through the centuries, it has been both a major center of learning and of political power. According to Pradyumna P. Karan, it was attacked by the Chinese during the Tibetan uprising in 1959. Since then, part of it has been "maintained as a showcase exhibit for foreign dignitaries." Most of the 2,500 monasteries in Tibet have been destroyed. Worship has been abolished since 1968. *The Changing Face of Tibet: The Impact of Chinese Communist Ideology on the Landscape* (hereafter KCFT); Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1976, pp. 13, 64, 70-71. Rolf A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (hereafter STC); Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972, pp. 139-140.

## V REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DALAI LAMA

*MR. PEMA GYALPO:* Mr. Chairman, Brothers and Sisters, or the other way—Sisters and Brothers.... First of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizing committee of this timely conference for extending their invitation to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. Secondly, on behalf of Geshe Tenpa, and my senior colleague, Mr. Tenzin Tethong, I would like to thank the committee for giving us this opportunity to speak among so many people who may not even have heard the name Tibet.

My presentation tonight is not going to be a scholarly report. Nor do I have an answer or conclusion such as was given by Professor Hwang yesterday. I have to ask for your patience also because English is my third language. My mother tongue is Tibetan. My second Motherland is India but since I have been living in Japan for the last sixteen years I think I should call Japanese my second language and English my third language. So please use your imagination. I am afraid you are really going to have a tough time but I hope that we can have a heart to heart contact tonight. I am not trained to be an eloquent speaker.

I would like to spend a few minutes with you with sincerity and with zeal to try to explain to you something which is deeply emotional for us. When the chairman first asked me to give this talk I took it rather too easily and accepted. Actually we first thought that we would be com-

ing here to learn from you rather than to be speaking in front of such an honorable audience. But when you asked me we felt a sense of responsibility to share what we have. In one sense, it is difficult for me to speak. In another sense, it is easy because it is a matter which is dear to us. That is especially the case since the Chairman asked me to speak about the activities of His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, and the thinking of His Holiness with relation to the aims of this Global Congress of the World's Religions. For us six million Tibetans, His Holiness is the object of respect and love, and our source of encouragement. He is the symbol of our national unity, someone who is close to the hearts of his people, including myself.

I appreciate the books Dr. Thompson gave me on past meetings of the Global Congress of the World's Religions. I find common ground in the name, the title, of this Congress. In the autobiography<sup>1</sup> of His Holiness, there is an Appendix on Buddhism. One section has the title, "One of the Many Religions of the World: Buddhism and Its Founder." He also considers or accepts other religions and thinks of our religion as one of the world's religions. That was a great help and assurance for me. As I went through the papers, the minutes of your past meetings, I found Professor Rao's paper on Gandhi.<sup>2</sup> In that paper Dr. Rao mentioned "Sarvadharmā," "reverence for all religions." I think this is exactly what His Holiness' attitude is towards all religions. His Holiness has a great respect for Gandhi. I think you can call him a disciple of Gandhi. He wrote about Gandhi in his autobiography.

My very first visit on my first morning in New Delhi was to the Rajghat, the place of cremation of Mahatma Gandhi. I was deeply moved as I prayed there on the green lawns which slope down to the Jamuna River. I felt I was in the presence of a noble soul—the soul of the man who in his life was perhaps the greatest of our age, the man who had contended till death itself to preserve the spirit of India and mankind—a true disciple of Lord Buddha and a true believer in peace and harmony among all.<sup>3</sup>

This is exactly what His Holiness feels about Mahatma Gandhi. In this I think you will find some relationship between your activities and the thinking of His Holiness.

I also went through the objectives of your Global Congress. Again I found that what you have written there as objectives are part of the life of His Holiness—His daily routines. Perhaps the best and most convincing way to understand this is to come into contact with the personality of His Holiness. He is not here so instead, I thought that perhaps I should tell you a little about the person His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

The present Dalai Lama is the 14th in the lineage.<sup>4</sup> Tenzin Gyatso was born July 6, 1935. He was born into a farmer's family.<sup>5</sup> His Holiness also writes about his background. He says,

I have always felt that if I had been born in a rich or aristocratic family, I would not have been able to appreciate the feelings and sentiments of the humble classes of Tibetans. But owing to my lowly birth, I can understand them and read their minds, and that is why I feel for them so strongly and tried my best to improve their lot in life.<sup>6</sup>

Now, this was written in his autobiography. This is also related to Tibet before the Chinese occupation. We had a few years in which we tried to live with our new friends. We tried to live in co-existence. We tried to implement some of the suggestions which they had. But they never let us have our suggestions implemented.

For example, His Holiness tried to change some of our land systems. He led the public in remodeling some of our old social systems. These reforms were stopped by the invasion.<sup>7</sup> It is in this connection that he has written about his birth and that he had been trying to improve the living standards of the ordinary people. His Holiness was enthroned in 1940 according to our traditional procedures. In 1950, at the age of sixteen, he assumed all the responsibility, both spiritual and political responsibilities, of his country. In October, 1950, China invaded Tibet. Perhaps you remember that the early 1950's was not a peace-

ful world. The Korean War was going on. When we tried to bring our issue to the United Nations, they were very busy with the Korean War. I don't know if it has been solved now or not.<sup>8</sup> His Holiness tried to tell his people that truth will ultimately prevail. Therefore he never asked his people to get weapons from America or some other country and fight with the enemies. Instead, he tried to find some ways to solve the problems by peaceful means. In this connection, His Holiness traveled to China in 1954 where he met the late Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai. He went to India in 1956 in the pursuit of peaceful solutions. He met Jawaharlal Nehru and other Indian leaders. We had sent delegations to Great Britain with whom we had—I think I should say quite close relationships. We also tried to get help from other neighbor countries. He tried to approach the United Nations directly several times. In spite of all these efforts we had to leave our own country in 1959.<sup>9</sup>

Since 1955, there have been unceasing efforts to appeal to the United Nations. Some countries with feelings for the weak, poor, unheard people of the earth supported us. We were finally heard and resolutions were passed in the United Nations in 1959, 1961, and 1965.<sup>10</sup> But the United Nations has its own limitations. The resolutions were passed but nothing was done. In the face of all these failures, Tibetans could only have felt irritated by having to wait, wait, and wait and just appeal for understanding or some fair judgment. But what His Holiness did in all these years was to emphasize the self support of the Tibetans. Traditionally, and culturally, we had very good relationships with India. The government received us very warmly. Many organizations from many different faiths sent us food. They built us schools and they came to help us. But His Holiness always told us that we Tibetans should not be professional refugees. There are still more needy people in many corners of the world.

Instead of giving us guns to go back to our own country and fight with our invaders, he tried to educate the Tibetans. He said that education was the key to our future. Today there are about 44 schools run by Tibetan refugees. I think we have more than 5,000 going to schools. We have

more than 200 who have graduated from universities. We have preserved our culture. The Indian government allows us to run our schools according to our own traditions. In order to meet the present world situation His Holiness has offered us not only teaching in Tibetan history, there are classes for Science, Mathematics, and other subjects which are being taught throughout the world.<sup>11</sup> The result is that we can be Tibetans and also move forward in the world. All those who have helped us can be proud of our accomplishments as we win back and maintain our human dignity. After twenty-one years, we went back to Tibet on a fact-finding delegation, led by Mr. Tenzin. Our new rulers have failed to educate even one Tibetan in these twenty-one years with a proper university education.

We appreciate what we have been able to do. In some places, we even lost our identity. For Tibetans, we are always Tibetans. For others—once you are stateless you are half human and half animal and something else. But in spite of this we have been able to educate many people. We have been able to export something to the outside. Export may not be the proper word. What we did was to help many Westerners become interested in Tibetan religion and the Tibetan way of life. Today there are more than three hundred monasteries and Buddhist centers throughout the world while in our homeland thousands and thousands of monasteries have been destroyed. This is a fact which even the Chinese admit now. But after losing our country, losing everything, we have been able to make some contribution to the rest of the world. On the other hand, we are trying to learn. We have our own books on hygiene. However, there is room for improvement. For example, many of our children died as infants. So we are trying to translate Western medicine into Tibetan. Tenzin was the founder of the *Tibetan Review* and the journal *Sheja*. *Sheja* is a magazine which is printed in Tibetan. *The Tibetan Review* is in English.<sup>12</sup> We try to share with others what we have and learn from others what they have. In this way His Holiness has also carried out a series of dialogues with the leaders of different faiths. He has not only met with religious leaders. He has met scientists,

doctors and lawyers. When he went to America, he met with American Indians. He met both Pope Paul VI (1973) and the present Pope John Paul II (1980), the Archbishop of Canterbury, and religious leaders in the United States and Canada. He has traveled extensively in Asia. He has visited Japan three times and Thailand three times. Throughout these missions, he has only one message and that is compassion. He has tried to explain to all people that we don't have an organization to propagate such ideas. We just want to share and this is what His Holiness feels. His Holiness feels that it is the individual mind that has to be enlightened. Therefore, he has continued with his dialogues for the last twenty years since we came to India. India itself, of course, is a country where many religions co-exist. There is always the opportunity of meeting so many religious people. This gives a great opportunity for His Holiness to share and to learn.

In closing I will quote some of His Holiness' own words. We do not have a book of quotations like Mao Tse-tung. Many Tibetans have more than one copy of the *Sayings of Chairman Mao*.<sup>13</sup> When you marry, they will give you a copy of Mao's *Sayings*. If you have a baby, they will give you a new copy. Tibetans have never published a book of quotations from His Holiness. There is one, however, by an American freelance photographer, Marcia Keegan.<sup>14</sup> She photographed His Holiness throughout his visit to North America in 1979. The quotations which I would like to read illustrate the similarities between what you are trying to say and what has already been said by Professor Hwang. As I was listening to Professor Hwang, I really felt that everyone has his own power to think. Sometimes people think the same thing and no one really has a monopoly over a concept. I think Professor Hwang was saying different words but with the same meaning.

I would like to quote some of His Holiness' thoughts.

All religions can learn from each other; the ultimate goal of all religion is to produce better human beings. Better human beings would be more tolerant, more compassionate and less selfish.

And on the purpose of religion His Holiness says that:

The purpose of religion is not for arguing. If we look for differences there is no use of talking about it. Like Buddha, Jesus Christ and all other great teachers, they created their ideas, teachings, with sincere motivation, love, kindness towards human kind, and they shared it for the benefit of all human kind. I do not think these great teachers came up with these differences in order to make more trouble. Because I believe in Buddhism, because I believe there is no creator, if I criticize other religions which believe in a creator then if Lord Buddha were still here he might scold me.

When His Holiness visited Hiroshima last year, some journalists asked him about his impressions. His Holiness was deeply moved and we could see tears in his eyes. He said, "We cannot blame the atomic bomb itself. It is the atomic bomb which every individual has in their hearts. Fire cannot extinguish fire, anger cannot extinguish anger, so we have to learn to take care of our hearts."

His Holiness was asked by some journalists in New York about the purpose of his visit and so forth. He said, "My visit has no particular purpose. I am a citizen of this world. I am a Buddhist monk, and in my mind all people are the same. I always have great respect for different systems. I have learned tolerance and compassion and kindness. I always want to go to as many places as possible and learn as many things as possible."

Another reason His Holiness is so concerned about continuing this dialogue is that as he says,

No one knows what will happen in a few decades or centuries—what adverse effects, for example deforestation, might have on the weather, on the soil, grain, etc. We are having problems because people are concentrating on selfish interests, on making money and not thinking of the community as a whole. They are not thinking of the earth and long-term effects on human beings as a whole. If the present generation does not

think about them now the future generation might not be able to cope with them.

That is why he wants to do what he can do in his life. He has even given thought to the institution of Dalai Lama, itself. His Holiness published a new constitution for the Tibetan people March 10, 1963<sup>15</sup> It is of course up to the people to approve it. In it, His Holiness has given the people the power to even remove himself from his position. He has said that the Dalai Lama system itself is not important, if it is not useful to the people, if it does not serve the purpose to be of service to the people. His talks are sometimes shocking to us. He says so many things which so many people have never said before. For us, he is the object of reverence and of our love. He is the source of energy and the symbol of our national unity. The authority of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the—I am trying to find the proper word in English—it is the people's feelings toward him—it is their love that keeps him there. Today we do not have authority to enforce any law. We do not have authority or power to punish. He is powerful because people love him, because our people love him. Today there are governments which are recognized by other governments but not their own people. In our case, if there were an election tomorrow, if it is a completely free expression of their will, the people will definitely be for His Holiness. This I felt very strongly when I visited China and our beloved country of Tibet last year with Mr. Tenzin Tethong. Our love for Him and our feelings for him can be understood through the names which we use for him. We call him Gyalwa Rinpoche, which means The Precious King, or Yeshe Norbu, The Wish Fulfilling Gem. You all know Dalai Lama means the Ocean of Wisdom. In these names and in many other ways you can find how people feel about him. You may have seen the latest issue of a new magazine which deals with the question of Tibet. It is very interesting.<sup>16</sup>

Finally again, I would like to thank you all for having given us this opportunity. His Holiness says that these kinds of dialogues or the search for co-existence may not be easy. Whether we can achieve world harmony or not, we have no other alternative than to try to achieve this

goal. It is the only alternative we have.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Thank you Mr. Gyalpo. We have heard something very interesting from Mr. Gyalpo about a religious tradition which has been completely dislocated from its natural surroundings and still retains its vitality and strength because of its emphasis on love, compassion, and tolerance. I am sure you have questions to ask of Mr. Gyalpo but I thought it is proper not to interrupt the presentations by the entire delegation. I understand that the other two members of the delegation are not going to speak long so let us allow them time to speak. Then at the end, we can open the meeting for discussion. At this time I will call upon Mr. Tenzin Tethong to say a few words.

*MR. TENZIN TETHONG:* Thank you very much. I think my role at this point is just to make a few comments and not to give a long talk. I just wanted to point out to those who were not here when Professor Hwang spoke last night that he went through a series of reasons—religious, political, economic and other reasons, as to why there should be and there can be interreligious dialogue. In some ways I was quite surprised.

Hwang wrote this paper from an academic viewpoint and yet what he was saying was almost identical to what we have heard from many religious teachers of the world. Personally, and as Mr. Pema Gyalpo said, I am most familiar with my own personal religious teacher, in this case His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. During his visit and talks at universities and religious groups in the United States he has said almost identical words to what Dr. Hwang has pointed out. I think this is a very encouraging sign that both religious leaders who sometimes may not be as academic in their approaches, and a person coming from a purely academic viewpoint, come to the same conclusions or reasons as to how and why we can have interreligious dialogue. It is further encouraging to note that it is right for organizations and congresses such as this to work on this issue. I want to point out one or two examples as to how interreligious dialogue can be of practical benefit.

One example which is often mentioned, and which

Professor Hwang's paper mentioned also, is the aspect of studying each other's tradition. There may be areas where you could apply certain aspects or techniques without having to really change your own beliefs or ideas. For example the Dalai Lama has often mentioned the fact that maybe certain meditation techniques from Asia, from the Buddhist tradition or Hindu tradition, can be of benefit to Christians. In turn, he has also said that there are many things in the practice of compassion which Buddhists can learn. He cited as an example all the charitable, educational, and social work that has been done by Christian missionaries throughout the world for many centuries. He has pointed out very strongly that very often Buddhists, including Tibetan Buddhists, talk of compassion. We meditate on compassion. But we implement very little in terms of actual human service. So this is one of the examples that we talk about where there could be actual benefit. One could implement a technique from another tradition without compromising one's own belief. In terms of furthering religious dialogue—it is not satisfactory just to lump all religions together. Nor is it good to have dialogue among the religious people and exclude others. If the purpose of religion is for mankind, then all the more there is a burden or responsibility on religious people to have this dialogue with non-believers. It is in this respect that His Holiness has often mentioned the need to communicate with people who we would consider non-believers. This includes anyone who is an atheist, communist, or non-practicing religionist.

We need to find the common ground on which our human concerns can be considered. The problems that confront human society today and probably more so in the future—the problems of nuclear arms, problems of future world populations—these and many more are problems that confront not only religious people but all mankind. Sometimes His Holiness has said that people who are actually working as scientists or in pure research or as doctors, may be doing more religious work than people who are dressed as religious people. We have very strong reasons for people who are not even religious to be brought into this kind of dialogue, to further the common concerns

of all mankind.

As my colleague pointed out, the Tibetan people and Tibetan Buddhism has been going through an extremely difficult period over the last thirty years. In terms of physical and material problems it is really, I think, much more than anyone should have to take. It is not a situation however, where one should complain about it. Instead, we feel that we have to make a positive contribution despite our situation. It is in this respect that whenever there is any conference of this nature, any kind of dialogue or meeting of different religious faiths, I think you will find a very positive participation from the Tibetan Buddhists and representatives sent by the Dalai Lama. Our contribution is in terms of participation and trying to be an encouragement to each other. That is why we are involved. It is not just the Dalai Lama who is meeting with religious leaders; other Tibetans are talking and meeting with different religious faiths. Among Christians, there is dialogue going on with Tibetan Buddhists in India. Christians have come to live in some of the new monasteries we have established. Tibetan scholars and monks have visited Christians in Europe and in the United States. In the coming year we will have a few monks who will be coming from India to live in some Benedictine Monasteries in the United States to exchange the experiences of monastic life.

I think one sort of common ground exists which is between Tibetan Buddhist monks and Christian monks. The monastic lifestyle has much in common. Dialogue continues, and I think there is reason to believe that this will continue for some time. This is something that is happening physically and on a more theoretical level. There are Tibetan Buddhist scholars who are talking about dialogue with non-believers such as Marxists. I think this is true among many Christian scholars and priests also who are trying to create a dialogue with Marxists in Europe and in the Soviet Union. On many of these levels I think there are people all over the world working in this direction. It is up to conferences like this Congress and people like yourselves who are interested and concerned in this matter to contribute your individual efforts. Thank

you very much.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Thank you Mr. Tenzin. Now we will hear a few words from an initiative disciple of the Buddha and a Venerable Lama from Tibet, The Venerable Gesh Tenpa Gyaltzen.

*THE VENERABLE GESHA:* (Translated from Tibetan into English) First of all I would like to greet those people who have been organizing this conference and those who are attending this conference tonight. I am one of the humble followers, a humble priest of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. With this opportunity for the followers of many different faiths to think about the word *religion* itself I hope that this kind of conference will be beneficial to many human beings. I would like to say a few words about why religion is important. There is no one who does not want to be happy or who does not wish to avoid suffering. Everyone should try to strive to achieve this happiness and remove the suffering. We cannot just be still and wait for ourselves to be happy and have our sufferings removed. In this we have to learn to remove the suffering and achieve happiness. And as a means to achieve this happiness and remove the suffering there is no other way but through religion and to be religious. I do not believe that we can achieve this result in any other way. I believe through religious practice we can achieve happiness for this life, for the next life, and for many lives to come. We can remove our suffering in the same way. Therefore I feel religion is very important. Even for this life there is nothing better than religious practice. For example, if we have a physical sickness or illness, there is a big difference in how we feel about this sickness, whether we have, or do not have a religious practice. If you do not have some religious practice, then you have the physical pain and also the mental stress. But if you accept religious practice then you can understand that this pain is a result of your previous deeds. Then you can lessen your feeling of illness. If you can feel that this is the result of your previous deeds then you can also lessen the physical pain. I personally feel that all sufferings which exist in myself are the results of my

own ignorance of the right way of practice and either not knowing or not practicing the right way. But if you know the right way to religion, then you can eliminate these sufferings. If you practice the religious way then you will have calmness and peace throughout your life. I would again like to thank you all for this opportunity to think about religion together. I would like to pray for the happiness of all living beings and for the success of the goal which His Holiness is pursuing. Thank you.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*My Land and My People* (hereafter DLLP); N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1962. The 1977 paperback edition is available from Rigpa Publications, London.

<sup>2</sup>K.L. Seshagiri Rao, "Mohandas Gandhi and the Hindu Vision of Religious Co-existence," pp. 50-63 in *Towards a Global Congress of World Religions: Conference Proceedings at Boston*, ed. Warren Lewis; Barrytown, N.Y.: Unification Theological Seminary, 1979.

<sup>3</sup>DLLP-146. p.6.

<sup>4</sup>The Geluk, Gelukpa, or Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism is called the Yellow Hat sect in the West, from the color of their hats in contrast to the Red Hats. The Geluk School began with the monastic reformer, Tsong-khapa (1357-1419), a monk from the Lake Koko Nor region in eastern Tibet-western China. The founder's nephew was dGe'dun grub-pa (1391-1474), believed to be the first rGyal-ba-rin-po-che, the first incarnation of Chenrezi, the Indian Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha (or Bodhisattva or god or goddess) of Mercy, who is sometimes called the ancestor of the Tibetan people. This incarnation is the highest in the Geluk tradition. Gyalpo Rinpoche became the abbot of dGa-ldan monastery. The third hierarch in the tradition, Sonam Gyatso or bSod-nams rgya-mtsho (1475-1542) was given the title Talai or Dalai Lama by the Tumet Mongol ruler, Altan Khan (1543-1583). In 1578, he invited Sonam Gyatso to Tumet where he led the Mongols to their second conversion. "Talai" is Mongol for "ocean" or "ocean-wide." "Lama" is the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit "guru" and is sometimes translated "superior one." In 1642, Gushri Khan of the Khoshoot Mongols, gave control of Tibet to the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag-dband blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682). Each Dalai Lama is believed to be the incarnation of the previous one, going back to Chenrezi or Chenresi. KCFT-10-12, 68-69.

Helmut Hoffman, et al., *Tibet. A Handbook* (hereafter HTH); Bloomington: Indiana University, 1975, "Chronological Table," pp. 239-245. NCE-2744-2745. DLLP-21, 240. Young Oon Kim, *World Religions*, Vol. 3; NY: Golden Gate Publishing Co., 1976. STC-139, says Gedün-trup was already the 51st incarnation of Chenrezi.

<sup>5</sup>His full name is Ngawang Lobsang Yishey Tenzin Gyatso. It is also transliterated bstan-'dzim rgya-mtsho. He was found at the age of two by a search party in the village of Taktser near Kumbum, east of Lake Koko Nor in Dokham, a Tibetan area of western China. He was installed in Lhasa on the Lion Throne in Potala Palace, as the 14th Dalai Lama in 1940. The location of the reincarnated 13th Dalai Lama had been indicated in visions to the Regent at the sacred Lake Lhamoi Latso, ninety miles south-east of Lhasa. The search party was disguised. The boy recognized their holy calling, saw through the disguises and distinguished the lama from the servant. When offered the 13th Dalai Lama's rosary, drum and walking stick along with replicas, he picked out the originals.

The 13th Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso or Thub-bstan-rgya-mtsho, was born in 1875, enthroned in 1879 and died in 1933. He was the strongest Dalai Lama since the "Great Fifth." It was in this period that Tibet had a number of contacts with other nations. In 1904, Francis Younghusband, the later founder of the World Congress of Faiths, led British troops to Lhasa and secured trade concessions. Younghusband had a vision or experience of at-oneness with the universe which later led to his establishment of the WCF. KCFT-10, 11 n., 18, 60, 69, 95. DLLP-5-43. HTH-239-246. Marcus Braybrooke, *Inter-faith Organizations*, 1893-1979; NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1980, pp. 20-28.

<sup>6</sup>DLLP-18.

<sup>7</sup>DLLP-64-67.

<sup>8</sup>Armed conflict lasted from June 25, 1950, to July 27, 1953. Negotiations continue. A visit to the so-called De-militarized Zone (DMZ) shows the tensions remain very high and very real.

<sup>9</sup>Noel Barber, *From the Land of Lost Content: The Dalai Lama's Fight for Tibet*; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970. "The Lhasa Uprising, March 1954," *Tibetan Review* 2, No. 3 (1969), 1-24. DLLP-155-223.

<sup>10</sup>United Nations, General Assembly. Official Records. 5th Session, Annexes, vol. 1 (1950): 16-18. Memorandum (Document A/1534) from the chairman of the delegation of El Salvador to the president of the General Assembly about invasion of Tibet by foreign forces; memorandum (Document A/1549) of Tibetan dele-

gation to the Secretary General about invasion of Tibet by China.

. Official Records. 5th Session, General Committee, 73rd meeting, November 24, 1950, pp. 17-20. Debate on "Invasion of Tibet by foreign forces."

. Official Records. 14th Session, Plenary Meetings, (1959), 831st to 834th Plenary Meetings, October 20-21, 1959, pp. 469-530. Debate on the question of Tibet.

. Official Records. 20th Session, Plenary Meetings, Vol. 3 (1965), 1394th Plenary Meeting, December 14th, 1965, pp. 1-10. Debate on the question of Tibet. Document A/1549, the UN Statement of October 21, 1959 and the 1961 Resolution are reprinted with relevant correspondence in Appendix II, DLLP 249-264. KCFT-109.

<sup>11</sup> DLLP—pp. 226-227.

<sup>12</sup> It was formerly known as *The Voice of Tibet*. *The Review* began publication in January, 1968. It is a monthly magazine published in Darjeeling, India.

<sup>13</sup> Stuart R. Schram, ed. *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*; NY: Praeger, 1967. John De Francis, *Annotated Quotations from Chairman Mao*; New Haven; Yale University Press, 1975.

<sup>14</sup> *The Dalai Lama's Historic Visit to North America*; NY: Clear Light Press, 1981. The paperback edition is available from Rigpa in London.

<sup>15</sup> DLLP—pp. 231-232.

<sup>16</sup> "Portrait of Change: Tibet Special Report," *Asiaweek* 7, No. 45 (13 Nov 81), 34-38. Editor's Note: Cf. also Alan Hamilton, "Time of Change for Tibet," *The Illustrated London News* 270, no. 7003 (Feb 82), 44-45. KCFT-101-109, has an extensive bibliography. Cf. also "Tibet," "Tibetan Art and Architecture," "Tibetan Buddhism," "Tibetan Language," NCE-2744-2745. HTH has an extensive bibliography for each section of the *Handbook*. In addition, note pp. 93-173, an overview of Tibetan religion: Folk Religion, the Shamanist Bon (Pon) Religion, and Buddhism. The last is described in terms of its introduction to Tibet and the development of its eight schools of thought. STC-305-316 has a bibliography of over 200 items. Religion is discussed in pp. 164-247. Appendix I, DLLP-235-248, is "An Outline of the Buddhism of Tibet." Cf. also the Dalai Lama's *The Opening of the Wisdom-Eye and the History of the Advancement of Buddhadharma in Tibet*; Wheaton, Ill.; The Theosophical Publishing House 1966, and *Universal Responsibility and the Good Heart*, 1980, paperback available from Rigpa. *The Buddhism of Tibet and the Key to the Middle Way*; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975. DLLP-69

says Tibet was unified under a king in 127 B.C. KCFT-67 says they came from Magadha (Bihar) when Asoka's empire broke up (c. 185 B.C.). The first 27 kings were of the Bon religion. The first Buddhist literature arrived in the time of the 28th, King Lha-Tho-Ri-Nyen-Tsen, when the Kushans were ruling northern India and inner Asia. The real beginning of Buddhism, however was during the reign of the 33rd, King Song-Tsen-Gampo (KCFT-12 dates him 605-650 while HTH-239 gives 620-649). In addition to his three Tibetan wives, he married Chinese and Nepalese princesses, both of whom were Buddhist.

## VI DISCUSSION

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Thank *you* Lama Tenpa for sharing your thoughts with us and for the blessing. We are running short of time. We have two more speakers for tonight. So I will allow maybe one or two questions. Please make it brief. Yes, please come to the microphone.

*SPEAKER:* How many Tibetan people are in exile? Is there any effort to restore His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, to the throne in Tibet under the present circumstances?

*PEMA GYALPO:* We have about 100,000 Tibetan refugees throughout the world. They are mainly in India, Nepal, Bhutan, and in Europe. We have a number in Canada, the United States and Japan. All together we are in nineteen different countries. The answer to your second question depends on whether it is for the Chinese side or for the Tibetans. If it is for the Tibetans—the Tibetan people have never dethroned him. He is still on the throne. On Chinese rule—well you know that since 1979 we have had some direct contacts with them. They have also through their own experiences I think, learned that they cannot win the hearts of the Tibetans through gun point. We have so far sent three delegations as fact finding missions. We also have some other contacts. You know, once you get bitten by a snake, if someone says rope, you get scared. Therefore, we are quite cautious. Of course, as I said, His Holiness is always searching for a peaceful solution.

*SPEAKER:* Would you care to make a comment whether or not Tarthang Tulku at Berkeley is an authentic representative of Tibetan Buddhism or not?

*PEMA GYALPO:* I think this is where our representative for North America could answer.

*TENZIN TETHONG:* Do you mean Tarthang Tulku at the Nyingma Institute in Berkeley?<sup>1</sup>

*SPEAKER:* Yes.

*TENZIN TETHONG:* There are a few Tibetan teachers and Lamas in Europe and in the United States. Many of them have studied in Tibet as monks or as Lamas. I think they are authentic but I can't pass a judgment as to whether anyone is a good man or a bad man.

*QUESTION:* Well if so, what are the reasons that you do not cooperate with each other?

*TENZIN TETHONG:* There are many Buddhist centers all over the world. Many of them have been set up by individuals in cooperation with certain institutions or with their own following or their own friends. We don't necessarily try to get everybody to do something together. Most of the Tibetan monastic communities in India are studying and working mainly in the traditional Tibetan systems. The monasteries we established are following the curriculum and the study patterns done in Tibet. Centers like the one in Berkeley and others in Europe and the United States are mainly catering to a new following, new students, and doing translation work. We don't really do similar work in that sense.<sup>2</sup>

*GEORGE N. MARSHALL:* May I rise to a point of personal privilege and refer to my biography of Buddha which is in the book room at the center in the Lotte Hotel. It was my privilege two years and three weeks ago to spend the final evening with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, when he was in the United States and to receive a blessing from him which I still possess. For those who don't know, it is a white scarf which he placed about my neck. I have it in the entrance way of my home to share the beneficence of His

Holiness with those who enter. My own approach and interest in Buddhism goes back many years. I have been a participant in, and a student of, the Buddhist Publications Society of Sri Lanka. I therefore have written from the standpoint of the "tradition of the elders," of the Theravada approach to Buddha. The foreword to my book was written by Huston Smith who is one of the acknowledged leaders in the field of World Religions and of Buddhist thought in the United States. It is available for purchase if people are interested in it.<sup>3</sup>

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* As I mentioned yesterday at the beginning of our meeting, in addition to the special delegation coming to us from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I invited some religious dignitaries from the Theravada Buddhist tradition. It is appropriate that since this is the first time we have had religious dignitaries coming from that part of the world, that we give them an opportunity to share their thoughts with us. I now call upon the Venerable Ananda Mangala to speak a few words to this audience.

*THE VENERABLE MANGALA:* Venerable Sirs, Mr. Chairman and dear friends: I thank all of you for allowing Buddhism to be heard and understood in this Congress. This Global Congress of the World's Religions is sponsored by the Theological Seminary of the Unification Church. It is the noblest thing they have done. I pay my tribute to Rev. Moon and to all of those who have sponsored these opportunities for dialogue; very few people can do this. The World Council of Churches convened the first Buddhist-Christian dialogue in 1970. It was my privilege to be the co-chairman of the first dialogue. Jesus said, "If two or three are gathered together" in his name, he will be there. I believe the Buddha extols meeting together. He asks the religions to get together. Discuss, have dialogue, but when you leave the assembly leave in concord not in difficulty. So this Global Congress is a Congress that will come together to bring concord. I was at the inaugural session of the Conference of Religion and Peace.<sup>4</sup> They too work for concord. There is plenty of room in this world for us all. There is more than we can do. Let us all work together. I wish you

all every success. Greetings from the Buddhist world. Thank you.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Thank you, Venerable Mangala. The Global Congress is an open forum. Unfortunately it is getting a bit late but perhaps we could spend a few more minutes in discussion.

*QUESTION:* Mr. Chairman, I am really enjoying this GCWR. There was one suggestion which I wanted to make. There are so many professors from all over the world who are teaching religions in various universities. We did not have the opportunity or at least I didn't have the opportunity to talk to them. I did not have the opportunity to ask them what is happening in their department, what courses they are offering, what books they have recommended. It would have been good to have exchanged some ideas, among ourselves. I thought that this was the best opportunity to have organized some kind of business meeting where we could have discussed our courses and learn from each other. This is too late for this year but in the future, if it is included in the program it would be a great advantage to us.

*DR. KALUPAHANA:* Thank you. We will give that some thought and discuss it in the Board of Trustees. Before I conclude our meeting I want to express our appreciation to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, for sending us a delegation and letting us know his views on Global Ecumenism. I wish to express our gratitude to the three representatives here. I would request you to convey our thanks to His Holiness for His response to our request. I wish to thank all of you who have been participating in our activities. Thank you and good night.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Nyingma or Nyingmapa is one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Its traditional origins are with the coming of the Indian Guru, Padmasambhava (750-790), who defeated the Bon priests in a contest of miracles. He established the famous Semye monastery in 790. The other three schools are the Kagyud, Kargyupa or Bka-brgyud-pa, the Sakya or Sa-skya and the Geluk or Gelugpa. The last, the Yellow Hats, was noted earlier. The Kagyud traces its beginnings to the Bengali mystic, Naropa (d. 1040) of Nalanda or alternately to his disciple, Marpa (1012-1097) and his disciple, Milarepa (1040-1143). The Sakya go back to the central Tibetan scholar, Khon-gyal or 'Khon dkon-mchog rgyal-po (1034-1073). The Nyingma, Kagyud and Sakya are known as Red Hats in the West.

The Sakya dominated Tibet from 1200-1350. In 1260, Kublai Khan (1215-1294), founder of the Chinese Yuan Dyanasty and grandson of the Mongol ruler, Genghis Khan (1189-1227), recognized Chogyal-Phag-Pa, the Grand Lama of Sakye, as the ruler of Tibet. He was the first of the priest-kings of Tibet. The Sakye rulers were followed by the Phamo Drupa lamas who ruled for 100 years. After another 200 years of kings (1435-1642), the fifth Dalai Lama began the 300 year rule of the Yellow Hats.

The Panchen (Tibetan for Great Scholar) Lama or Panchen Erteni (Mongol for Precious) or Panchen Rinpoche is the second highest incarnation of the Yellow sect. He is or was (the last one died in 1968) the presiding abbot of Trushi-lhunpo (Tashi Lump) monastery near Shigatse west of Lhasa. The first was the tutor of the Fourth and Fifth Dalai Lama. The Fifth recognized the Panchen as the incarnation of Amitabha, the Buddha of Limitless Light, spiritual father of Chenrezi. There have been seven or ten Panchens, depending on whether you start with Lobzang Chokyi Gyaltzen! Blo-bzang Chos-Kyi rgyal-mtshan (1570-1662) or earlier as Stein does with Khe-Trup (1358-1438). The seventh

or tenth and last, was born in 1938 and installed in 1944. He was born in a Chinese area, educated by them, backed by them, and removed by them in 1965 when he spoke in favor of the Dalai Lama. STC-84. KCFT-68-69. HTH-243, traces the Amitabha incarnation back to Tsong-kha-pa's disciple, mkhas-grab-rje. NCE-1776. DLLP-102-114, 125-126, 133, 141, 143, 212, 240.

<sup>2</sup>For Buddhism in America, including Tibetan Buddhism, see Rick Fields, *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*; Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 1981. Emma McCloy Layman, *Buddhism in America*; Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1976.

<sup>3</sup>*Buddha: The Quest for Serenity*; Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.

<sup>4</sup>Braybrooke, op. cit., pp. 61-88, discusses the development of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP).

SECTION C  
REGIONAL MEETINGS

THE GLOBAL CONGRESS  
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

The regional meetings in Sri Lanka are reported as part of the Seoul Proceedings. Subsequent to the GCWR meeting in Seoul, there have been three regional meetings:

Islamabad in Pakistan, and  
Mysore and Varanasi in India.

## I ISLAMABAD

Dr. Isma'il al Faruqi convened the meeting in Islamabad. Here is his report.

Thirty Muslim scholars from around the world met at the Intercontinental Hotel, Islamabad, January 4-8, 1982, under the auspices of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (USA) and the Islamic University (Islamabad, Pakistan) to consider materials pertinent to the Islamization of Knowledge. All of them were professors at universities specializing in various subjects as well as leaders of the Islamic Movement in their own countries. Eight were from Pakistan, six from Saudi Arabia, four from the USA, three from Malaysia, two from the Sudan, and one from each of the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt, Sri Lanka and India. At the termination of their seminar on Friday noon January 8, they were asked to stay over in order to meet that evening to discuss the Global Congress of the World's Religions.

In a meeting of three and one-half hours, Dr. al Faruqi presented the case of the GCWR and requested the conferees to find answers to the following questions.

1. *Should the Muslim World participate in the GCWR?*

There was unanimous agreement that the Muslim World should participate in the GCWR as well as all major and minor events arranged by the GCWR.

2. *If it were to do so, what should be its goal?*

The following answers were given:

- a. To bring humankind into awareness of their Creator's presence, dominion over the world and impending judgement of all.
- b. To promote the universal message of peace and justice taught by all the religions of the world, especially by Islam.
- c. To combat the forces of materialism and secularism.
- d. To cleanse and reconstruct the image of Islam and the Muslim World soiled by their enemies.
- e. To present to the world the problems of the Muslim peoples where justice has been violated (Phillipines, Burma, Thailand, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Palestine, Cyprus, etc.)
- f. To learn from other religions, cultures and civilizations of what divine truths have crystallized in them.
- g. To cooperate with the peoples of the world to promote and maintain ethical standards in individual, societal (especially family) and interreligious affairs.

3. *By what means may this goal be realized?*

The following answers were given:

- a. Lectures, film and slide documentaries
- b. Shorter presentations at meetings
- c. Dissemination of literature
- d. Exhibits of books and art objects
- e. Performances of creative arts
- f. Individual contacts
- g. Exchange of visits with Muslim World countries

4. *Who should/may attend from the Muslim World?*

The following answers were given:

- a. Outstanding scholars
- b. Representatives of governments
- c. Representatives of religious associations
- d. Religious leaders

5. *What preparation must be taken in anticipation of the GCWR?*

The following answers were given:

- a. Contact and keep all of the people identified in ques-

tion 4 *au courant* of developments.

- b. Form local committees to study, survey and advise.
- c. Form an *ad hoc* committee to prepare literature in the various Muslim languages on the GCWR.

6. What is a realistic expectation of the would-be result of participation in the GCWR?

The following answers were given:

- a. Any fulfillment, however partial, of any of the goals outlined in question 2 makes Muslim participation worthy of the effort.
- b. As an occasion for the call of Islam to be made and heard, Muslims ought to participate. In doing so, they only propose. Allah—*subhanahu wa ta'ala*—will dispose.

## II GCWR MEETINGS IN INDIA

A regional meeting of the Global Congress of the World's Religions was held in Mysore, India from 27-28 May '82. Mysore is in the state of Karnataka (formerly Mysore state) in southern India. Dr. M.S. Nagaraja Rao was the convener. There were 20 people present, including 4 student observers. Participants came from Mysore, Bangalore, Dharwar, and Pondicherry. They are philosophers, linguists, orientalist, political scientists, religious and academic leaders. While predominantly Hindu, the Christian and Muslim perspectives were also represented.

The undersigned gave a brief history of the GCWR and its concern to build bridges of understanding among the religions of the world. Copies of the 1982 brochure were distributed along with copies of the first two newsletters (the first in photocopy form). The 1980 brochure and the February '82 issue of *Cornerstone* with its report on the February '82 Executive Committee meeting in New York City were circulated for reading.

Dr. K.S. Hegde, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mysore, chaired the opening session and gave an opening statement on the meeting's theme, "Approaches to World Unity." Dr. K.B. Ramakrishna Rao gave the opening address on the theme. He also closed the meeting on Friday with a paper on "World Unity—The Perspective of the Bagavad Gita." He emphasized the religious aspects. Dr. K. Krishnamurthy took a Vedantist approach. Dr. Anthony Chirappanath, a Roman Catholic priest, presented a

Gandhian view while Swami Harshanandaji took a meditative approach. The discussion of each paper was lively. The diplomatic perspective of Sri Siddharthchary of the diplomatic service (Africa, China, Europe) and that of international law (Smt. Lata Krishnamurti) are especially noteworthy. Dr. M.S.N. Rao is transcribing the tapes of the discussion. Plans are underway for publication of the sessions. Five of the papers are printed in this volume.

Participants carried on the discussions over coffee, lunch and dinner. These informal contacts are in some ways as important as the formal sessions. Participants disagreed frequently but were of one mind on the value of the meetings and look forward to more in the future.

Dr. Chirappanath took me for a visit with Roman Catholic Bishop Matthias Fernandez and Chancellor Dennis Norshna of Mysore. I gave them copies of the new brochure and the second newsletter (May '82).

M.S.N. Rao and Thompson flew to Varanasi, also known as Benares, the holy city in northeast India. Here Dr. L.N. Sharma and Prof. R.S. Mishra convened a regional meeting of the GCWR, co-sponsored with the Department of Philosophy of the Benares Hindu University. Dr. Mishra chairs the Department of which Dr. Sharma is a member. It was an open meeting of the Department and 40-55 people attended the three sessions. These included several Burmese Buddhist monks and Westerners who are students at the University. The undersigned again presented the history and cause of the GCWR and distributed literature.

The theme here was "Religion: Today and Tomorrow." In a surprising, unplanned way, the presentation complemented the Mysore meetings. Virtually all speakers began with the past and worked up to the present. We must deal with that past and heal the wounds of the past. That can be done because we live in a new day. Travel and technology put us in touch with one another and make it possible to share our understandings in a mutual give and take. While some stressed the tolerance of Hinduism, others noted the lack of tolerance such as the split between today's India and the predominantly Muslim Pakistan (now Pakistan and Bangladesh) and the current concern of

some Sikhs to form a separate state. Hinduism itself is divided into a variety of forms and illustrates the need for unity in diversity that the GCWR is working toward.

The lively discussion within the sessions and informally over refreshments spoke to the importance of this meeting. Several speakers and discussants noted this and thanked the GCWR, congratulated it and wished their respective blessings on the future work of the GCWR. The proceedings were again taped. Rao is transcribing them and it is hoped this material too can be published. Sharma and Mishra hope to sponsor another meeting in December that will draw participants from neighboring areas.

Subsequent to the meetings, Rao, Sharma and Thompson met with the Maharaja of Varanasi. He has turned over his political responsibilities to the state but retains the religious leadership which his family has held for centuries. We discussed the meetings, asked him to be a patron, and gave him literature on the GCWR. Our Indian colleagues and members of his staff were surprised at the amount of time he gave to our discussions.

Rao and Thompson returned to New Delhi where we met with Sri Radhakrishna, GCWR President for Action and Director of the Gandhi Peace Foundation. After a six month illness, he is once again in action. We briefed him on the meetings, the current state of the GCWR, fundraising, and programs, and gave him advance copies of the literature. We discussed the controversy of Unification sponsorship, including opposition from some inter-faith activists. Radhakrishna would be willing to sponsor a regional meeting of the GCWR in New Delhi.

The undersigned then travelled to Jerusalem and met with GCWR trustee Dr. R.M. Zwi Werblowsky of Hebrew University. I briefed him on the meetings in India. We discussed the current state of the GCWR, including fundraising and programs. He suggested a low profile for the present. He himself will be in Japan from July through April. My luggage had been lost so I could not give him the new literature but this will be sent to him.

Henry O. Thompson  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees

**II: PART 1**  
**APPROACHES TO WORLD UNITY**  
 —A Vedantic approach  
 Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy

Professor and Head  
 Department of Sanskrit  
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Vedanta is the cream of ancient Upanisadic wisdom as systematized by great Acaryas or gurus in the course of several centuries in India. While fully alive to the diversity of faiths recognizing God or unseen controlling powers, and to the efficacy of the religious emotion in its multiple manifestations, it keeps itself open at the same time to reason and does not overrate dogma or conventional ritual. Reason is geared towards realization of the highest spiritual end, termed usually as *Moksa* or final emancipation from *samsara* or the unending cycle of birth and death. Vedanta does not speak of men but Man; the unity that underlies all individual men. Each one is individually imperfect, possessing diverse traits of personality. But viewed ontologically, the many are in essence but changing forms of the Immutable One, which alone is; which alone *knows* and which alone is of the nature of ecstatic bliss. SAT—CIT—ANANDA or EXISTENCE—KNOWLEDGE—BLISS is the very nature (*Svarupa-laksana*) of reality. And that is Advaita Reality. One must rise above one's primor-

dial Ignorance to be awakened into this realization, which is a sense of complete unity, tranquility and Peace—*santam*, *swami*, *advaitam*.

Religion is recognized and transcended in this philosophy of Absolute Monism. The rites of worship (*Karma-Kanda*) are not decried but deified in the light of self-realization (*atmasaksatkara*). So long as rituals are motivated by desire for personal gain or welfare, they cannot serve the ultimate goal of *moksa*, which is the Highest Value in life (*paramapurushartha*). But that is the way of the common man who thinks he is religious. He should be taught how to discharge religious duty without any selfish motive. The individual's ego-centrism must be remedied by making him realize the Infinity of his inmost self. Any religion is better than irreligion since it instills the spirit of loving devotion (*bhakti*) and self-surrender (*prapatti*) to the omniscient and omnipotent Godhead with Infinite grace. But no religion is complete until it culminates in an awakening into Absolute Truth, an awakening into Advaita-consciousness where one's inmost being, the subject itself is recognized, as identical with the Almighty God or Brahman, who is the One behind and beyond the Many. This awakening alone is the saving *jnana* or wisdom.

Our lives are governed indeed by multiple interests—sensual, economic, social, political and so forth. Our actions depend upon our interests and a clash with those of others is inevitable. All these conflicts must be first recognized at their source, if they are to be remedied. The source of all clashes and conflicts is the mind of man. The moods of the mind (*citta*) are unpredictable and proverbially fleeting. But more constant is the reasoning intellect (*buddhi*), yet it allows room for many closely-reasoned ideologies. Doubts and misgivings assail the *manas* or willing agent. The ego is always there asserting its primacy over all else. Such is the *antahkarana* or psychological make-up of men. Until this ego-centered or mind-centered or even intellect-centered personality or man is purified and sublimated in the light of the refulgent *Atman* or Inmost Soul, there is no permanent salvation or solution to the problem of evil. The eternal quest then is for the unchanging One behind the

changing many.

All actions of individuals and peoples come under the realm of *vyavahara* or daily routine. They are conditioned by the very nature of man as a social and sensual being. And they cannot be stopped. "*Svabhavo duratikramah.*" Nature cannot be changed. Wisdom lies in seeing clearly and squarely that this Nature (*prakrti*) is acting on her own; and all the clashes and conflicts are inevitable so long as Nature is not transcended by the higher wisdom of the witnessing spirit or self. Multiplicity of objects, names and forms on the one hand and conflicting interests and desires on the other which drive men to diverse activities—all stem from a single source ultimately—which we may, for want of a better word, call universal Ignorance or *Avidya*. There is no knowledge—scientific or sensory—which does not come under the realm of this universal Ignorance which is Man's estate.

What is required then is a total change in perspective. One should learn to understand there is a higher spiritual awakening possible for man; an awakening wherein all the activities of men and nations, whether at war or peace, are no more substantial than the passing shadows in a dream. It is not in one's hands to stop dreaming so long as one is a slave of one's own mind. The mastery over mind during the waking state is as illusory as one's mastery over it in the dreaming state. The sooner this truth is realized, the sooner the approaches to world unity will open up and become clearer.

In other words, man has to save himself, by changing himself from within, by becoming truly the master of his mind. He should see God not outside but within himself. All the codes of ethics and moral values, all the disciplines of ritual, sacrifice and forms of worship, and all the sacred gospels and scriptures become valid as helping religious men in this Eternal spiritual quest by keeping their minds in check. The moment they cease to render such help, they are no better than atheistic teachings. Humanity at large remains still to be educated since inner Perfection has not yet been attained.

Indian thought is insistent that not only the mind of

man but even the universal laws of Nature outside are constituted of the same triple constituents—*sattva* or purity; *rajas* or activity and *tamas* or lethargy. It is their balance which keeps Nature going as it does. Their imbalance alone accounts for creation or destruction. That is Indian cosmology. But the same is true of the human mind. It has also a demonical dimension of *rajas* and *tamas* within accounting for all wars and worries. But what is important to realize is that it has a godly dimension of purity or *sattva* also. There is no man on earth who does not have a conscience whose drives are always for peace. As Kalidasa puts it—*satam hi sandehapadesu vastusu pramanam antahkarana-pravrttayah*. The human conscience alone is the ultimate authority in deciding the right from the wrong. This is the element of *sattva* which should not be allowed to be silenced by demonical tendencies.

If towering intellect and wordly enjoyments could ensure peace and happiness, the world should have been different today when man's scientific achievement has reached its zenith. There should have been peace and no room for war or conflict, but things are otherwise. Purity of conscience whose clarion-call has always been peace has suffered heavily. It can be reclaimed only by the discipline of universal religion. The mind has to be purified first and transcended; then peace will not be a shadow or a slogan but a living reality. The transcendence of mind demanded by Vedanta implies rising above both pride and prejudice, hate and love, dogma and doubt. The upanisadic *mantra* is "Peace" "*santih santih santih*". The Bhagavadgita's ideal Man is a *sthitha-prajna* or *gunatita*; one whose vision is steady and one who has transcended the pulls of the mind, anchored securely in his inmost self. This insight of Vedanta is as relevant today as ever before. It is so broad, tolerant and universal that it can yet take us nearer the eternal goal of humanity for peace. Only, we should have ears to listen to its message which looks, on the face of it, to be impossible. All the sages and saints of India, theistic or atheistic like the Buddha, speak with one voice that peace is attained only by self-culture, individually and collectively. This is the positive aspect of Vedanta

which gives an adequate explanation to all religion by upholding the infinite dignity of Man identifying him with the Supreme Absolute, in his essence as Spirit. Its negative aspect which is equally important denies ultimacy of empirical and mundane dichotomies and paradoxes.

## II: PART 2

### APPROACHES TO WORLD UNITY

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Even though *world unity* has been one of the highly cherished goals of mankind since civilization dawned on this earth, it has remained an elusive entity out of our practical reach. Reasons are obvious to any thinking person who has larger human concerns. Therefore, my attempt is to ponder over positive possible steps that could be taken which could lead us to that cherished destination.

I want to deal with only four major approaches. Before that we should begin with a philosophical question. Without a philosophy, a principle, an idea to live with and work for, there can be no meaning in life at all. Therefore let us ask: what kind of a human society do we want to see in the future? What kind of a world do we want to live in? Justice is the key word upon which I would like to formulate my answer. I would like to see the future of the world primarily based on justice of all kinds: family justice, emotional justice, economic justice, social justice, political justice, national justice, international justice. Once basic agreements could be reached on these aspects, it becomes easy to work out the structure and methodology with which the objectives could be reached. From this angle I would like to

discuss the following four approaches.

### 1. *Educational*

In all evolutionary societies the educational philosophy, structure and methodology seem to have been generally tuned to the fulfillment of the individual's exclusive benefits, skills and advancement, instead of providing for the total benefit and advancement of the entire society. Therefore unbalanced development of various faculties has occurred, devoid of social dimension and commitment. Thus innumerable conceptual barriers and narrow prejudices began to dominate human actions and aspirations. This situation must be changed. It means organization and implementation of alternative systems of education, wherever required.

It has to be oriented toward humanity, problem related and solution seeking. Then education would become a commodity available to all members of the society. Simultaneously efforts must be made to create educational systems that are not confined within four walls of institutions or within the pages of books alone. They must assume direct relationship with all areas of human activity, from the kitchen to the United Nations, from the farm to the battle-field. As advocated by Mr. Soedjatmoko of Indonesia, the Rector of the United Nations University, a modern global learning process must emerge through which "new and faster ways of learning to meet the demand for knowledge in countries where population is exploding," should be possible. A proper balance should be struck between experiential learning and academic learning.

### 2. *Cultural*

The cultural approach is very much interrelated with the educational approach. To learn to appreciate the inherent values of different cultures, should be part of any educational philosophy and practice. Food, language, various kinds of fine arts and performing arts etc., being the important symbols that represent the sum and substance of any culture, they should be given adequate importance in all educational planning and practice. As the philosophy of sports excludes narrow prejudices of blind

nationalism, understanding cultural relationships between differing social systems is bound to minimize potential areas of conflicts.

A highly developed culture must demonstrate itself in the life and behaviour patterns of individuals and groups. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the true meaning and purpose of all value systems from time to time. For example: a philosophy of war used to be extolled in most societies in which one person had complete control of the entire population. In such a society, the educational/cultural content was also tuned to suit that philosophy. We, today, who believe in democratic process for the reconstruction of society, continue to carry forward certain symbolic representations of those values and systems which have become obsolete in the interest of humanity. Today we want all members of the society to feel and function as participants, in the process of production, distribution, administration, decision making, etc. Then will only new values and systems emerge without any violent upheavals. Already custodians of cultures themselves have begun to question the validity and utility of many aspects of our cultural life.

The world needs a new global culture in which basic human aspirations are to be promoted, rather than sectarian values under the garb of various customs and rituals. We should be prepared to alter or let go of various cultural symbols that come in the way of world unity.

### 3. *Economic*

The most important stumbling blocks on the path towards world unity are constituted by various elements that control the economic means and ends of social and national relationships. The world has only two alternatives: either voluntarily accept the need for change and then reject certain traditional economic values and structures; or be prepared to face more conflicts and perish collectively. This is inevitable because in most of the societies it is the minority that controls, exploits, makes decisions, makes rules and enjoys more at the cost of the majority. The masses everywhere are becoming more conscious of the predicament in which they continue to exist and suffer.

They have begun to mobilize themselves to struggle against the mighty power-structures which control, utilize and exploit them.

Solutions to most of these economic problems are either through violent means or through nonviolent means. Violence has already become so violent that it has begun to defeat its own purpose. Dialogue and negotiations must take precedence over any other methods. The latest trend that has emerged among nations is to be appreciated and encouraged. The north-south dialogue, the group of 77 dialogue, the UNCTAD deliberations etc., are consequences of the above reality. These dialogues must not only help settle problems between nations and regions, but also should contribute to evolving new methods of economic relationships through which the acute disparity between one human being who lives in a village in Orissa and another human being who occupies the presidency at the White House or the Secretaryship of the U.N., must be narrowed down.

#### *4. Political*

The political approach to world unity must essentially depend upon the above three aspects. If the educational, cultural and economic approaches could be well-coordinated in a given period of time, the consequent political approach would be very easy and handy. Then institutions like the United Nations will have an easy task in taming the lions and lambs of the political jungle of the world arena. However imperfect the UN structure is at present, however ineffective its resolutions are, it is still a great hope for mankind. Honest and concrete attempts must be made to make it more effective and useful. Then many imponderable political problems would find solutions in the UN assembly hall. Both national governments and enlightened and concerned individuals all over the world must and can play a positive and large-hearted role in this direction.

Religions can play a most dynamic role in forging world unity, but unfortunately the history of the world has shown that they have not been able to do so. Unless they are prepared to give up their garbs and walls for the sake

of promoting the essential truths of their basic teachings, they don't seem to have a future positive role. Once they are able to do it, they will discover that they are primarily aiming at the same goal—human brotherhood and unity.

“Remember your humanity and forget the rest,” declared Einstein and Russell a few years ago. Science with Humanism seems to be the sure and secure way towards world unity. Let us strive for that.

## II: Part 3

### APPROACHES TO WORLD UNITY

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The institution sponsoring this seminar is the *Global Congress of the World's Religions*. It is in good company with similar organizations like the Universal Religious Alliance, World Parliament of Religions, Union of All Religions, World Congress of Faiths—all working for world unity, since the first quarter of this century. It is interesting to note that all of them aim to build world unity on the concept of religion or faith. That is, as it should be. There are organizations which are political, social, scientific and economic which also have the same purpose, but work in different ways. However, the most basic foundation for all of them lies in religion or faith. It is the *primordium* on which all kinds of relationships will have to rest, and all unity is to be forged.

However, the question arises: How many are religious; how many believe? How can religion provide the necessary stimulus for all—the religious and the nonreligious, the theist and the atheist—or motivate them to work for world unity on its credentials? How can it instill faith in the faithless? Further, in the context of the modern technological scientific age, an age of positivism, scientism and

empiricism, to what extent can religion and religious criteria be credible? Evidently, the concept of religion is both complex and touchy. It is amongst the religions themselves that we find disunity. The world has witnessed crusades on principles of religion, has shed blood in the battles between faiths.

An attempt on the part of organizations, such as the one sponsoring this seminar, becomes very relevant and significant. One of the unique features of the present century is that it makes or compels religions to transcend their narrow fortifications, and to re-examine their postulates or credentials; and in the face of the imminent possibility of global destruction, to think of saving mankind. During this century more than at any other time, man is feeling the intensity of the truth of the statement of one of the great thinkers of modern times, Heidegger, who says: 'man is thrown into the world, and is abandoned for death.' It is an invitation to face our world situation, or to choose to die with the burden of the past corrupt tradition and belief.

It is in this context, that the urgency of world unity and cooperation is to be seen, not simply as a superficial consideration, but as the primary necessity of one's own existence, and the existence of others.

There are several approaches to world unity, and I do hope this seminar will, at best, enumerate or take note of them (within the short time at its disposal) and carry home the thoughts that emerge in the discussion for further elaboration and application.

We have several approaches, and so consequently several definitions, too, of religion, but the more significant may be noticed here:

1. the purely *mystical*, which transcends all limitations of finite life and stands away from them or besides them in ecstatic union with the Infinite, speechless and timeless, boundless and nameless.
2. the *philosophical*, which also examines on intuitional grounds, besides rational and empirical, the most universal principles of being and existence beyond particulars or parochialism.
3. the *theological*, which in its own way sees freedom

and unity amongst the faithful in strict adherence to a Messiah, Prophet or to the revealed word of God.

4. the *sociological*, *anthropological* and the *psychological* which see in beliefs and customs and modes of worship and prayer a universal pattern of behavior and modifications for coming together for mutual or communal benefit and survival.

To go to the details of the *philosophical*, the second in the list above, there are several recent perspectives, which in their own distinct ways throw light on the phenomenon of religion, vis-à-vis, the existential, the phenomenological, the humanistic and the linguistic. But the most significant development of the century has been the approach through:

5. the *scientific* study of religion or comparative study of religions. It is with this approach, and with the usage of the philosophical methodologies mentioned above, that the future of the understanding of world religions is bound.

For achieving a world unity either in life or in faith we need a new hermeneutic which will alter our understanding not only of the essence of religion, but also make us respect the practices of religion however varied they may be. By an adoption of such a hermeneutic, it should be possible for us to discover what Paul Tillich, so significantly, calls the 'dimension of depth,' the '*ultimate concern* of all,' which is unconditional in man's spiritual life. Lest we splinter away the unexperienced truth as alien, it is such a hermeneutic which guided the existentialists, Tillich and Heidegger, to propose it as 'subjectivity.' Lest the incidentals and the contingents weigh more than the *essence* in our judgements, it is such a hermeneutic which helped the phenomenologists, like Husserl to stick to subjectivity as the essence and to 'bracket' or 'suspend' all objectivity. Lest personalization take out of Truth its universality, it goaded the existentialist theologians, like Bultmann, to bring in 'demythologization' and to call for the expression of truth in nonhistorical symbolism. Lest we lose ourselves in particular manifestations of truth as final, it is the grasp of comparative study of religions to expose us to the glory of the vista

of manifestations in which Truth itself exists; and expresses itself. This we find in the memorable works of Max Muller, Rudolf Otto, Jochim Wach and a host of workers in the field, such as W.C. Smith, M. Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa.

Incidence or achievement of world unity is a complex effort and is bound to be more universal than particular and parochial, more liberal than conservative. It should be not merely the result of cognitive venture but be the consequence of an affective experience. A truth of such unity is not simply to be known but should be lived. For this end, understanding should strive, whereby religious striving turns out to be the whole affair of life—cultural, economic, political, social etc., to permeate all secular activities to the extent that the fine mark of distinction should vanish. A new sense of values should fill life making it worth living. A new hermeneutic can only pave the way for the much desired community of the world, and a consolidation of the ideal of unity.

No better expression of the grasp of this hermeneutic could be found than is reflected in the famous Asokan edict (No. 12):

Devanam priya, Priyadarsi honours all sects, the ascetic and the lay. He honours them with gifts and tributes of all kinds. But he, Devanam priya, does not lay so much weight on gifts and tributes, but rather on that in all religions there might be growth in essence (*sara vriddhi*). The reason for this is that no praise for one's own religion or reproach of other religions should take place on irrelevant occasions. On the contrary, every opportunity ought to be utilized for honouring other religions. If one proceeds in this way, he furthers his own religion, and renders good to others religions. Otherwise he does harm to his own religion for he would be disparaging other religions out of admiration for one's own. He who injures his own religion is most commended. For men should learn and respect the fundamentals of each other's religion.

Asoka laid the criterion for the study of comparative religions thus, when he continues his edict by saying:

... It is indeed the cherished desire of Devanam Priya that followers of all religions become well informed about the doctrines of other religions and acquire universal knowledge... (and by such means) promote each one's religion and the glorification of righteousness or *dharma*.

A recent Professor of the History of Religions, Friedrich Heiler, has summarized his results of comparative study of religions, in the spirit of the Asokan edict, and writes thus: "There are seven principal areas of unity which the high religions of the earth manifest." They are:

1. The first is the reality of the transcendent, the holy, the divine, the Other. Above and beneath the colorful world of phenomena is concealed the true being...
2. Second, this transcendent reality is immanent in human hearts...
3. This reality is for man the highest good, the highest truth, righteousness, goodness and beauty...
4. This reality of the Divine is ultimate love which reveals itself to men and in men...
5. The way of man to God is universally the way of sacrifice...
6. All higher religions teach not only the way to God, but always and at the same time the way to the neighbour as well...
7. Love is the superior way to God...

(*The History of Religions—Essays in Methodology*, Ed. Eliade & Kitagawa. 1959 pp 142-151.)

Any effort at world unity should comprehend this identity of vision of all religions and profit by the common manifestations of the religious spirit to establish the Kingdom of God on earth or convert the kingdom of man to a divine kingdom. The intuition of another great thinker, Schleiermacher, who said, "the deeper one progresses in religion, the more the whole religious world appears as an indivisible whole," should lead us in the path with

hope. And no less the congregational prayers of the Vedic Seers help us fulfill the ideal:

Sam gacchadhvam sam vadadhvam  
 sam vo manamsi janatam/  
 Deva bhagam yatha purve  
 samjanana upasate//  
 Samano mantrah samitih samani  
 samanam manah saha cittamesham/  
 Samanam mantramabhi mantraye vah  
 samanena vo havish juhomi//  
 Samani va akutih  
 samana hrdayani vah/  
 Samanamastu Vo mano  
 yatha vah susahasati//

(Rig Veda X, 187, 2-4)

Meet together, talk together, Let your minds apprehend alike in like manner as the ancient Gods concurrently accepted their portions of oblations.

Common be the prayer of these (in assembly). Common be the achievement, common the purpose, associated be the desire. I repeat for you a common prayer. I offer for you with a common oblation.

Common be your intention, common be the hearts. Common be your thoughts, so that there may be a thorough unity amongst you.

OM! SANTIH SANTIH SANTIH!

## II: Part 4

### GANDHI'S APPROACH FOR WORLD UNITY THROUGH RELIGION

by Dr. Anthony K. Chirappanath

Can religions play any role in the process of world unity? Or, can it only be a source of disharmony? Religions are meant to establish peace and unity on earth. The Hindu prayers often conclude with "Om Shanti." The Christian greets his brother: "Peace be with you." and the very word 'Islam' means 'Peace'. Paradoxical, indeed, that they cannot coexist in peace and unity. For, what is the testimony of history in this regard? What has usually happened at the birth of any new religion? Is there any religion which has not caused division, dissension, discord and even bloodshed? It appears that religions have always been a disintegrating factor, having in them the very seeds of disharmony. And we do not find any reason for it to be otherwise in the future.

#### MOHANDAS GANDHI

According to Gandhi, the problem is not with the religions, but with the religionists, that is, the so-called followers of religion: due to lack of proper understanding they do not follow their religions properly. According to his understanding of religion, the differences will not divide mankind, only enrich it. If we are to hope that religion will play a role in bringing about unity and harmony, it appears that we have to take Gandhi seriously and try to understand

religion as he expressed it through his life and thought.

Gandhi believed in the fundamental unity of all religions. He affirmed the equality of all religions, for truth, he said, is not the monopoly of any particular religion. This implies that we must have regard and respect for religions other than our own, and that we must try to learn from other religions. Perhaps the most important feature of Gandhi's religious philosophy is that, it not only says all religions are true, but it also says that all religions are false. "We recognize that all these faiths are true and divinely inspired and all have suffered through the necessarily imperfect handling of imperfect men." It is here that Gandhi's view differs most from the traditional understanding of religion.

It is true that Gandhi had his own solution to the problem of religious disunity. His solution consisted of removing the misunderstandings about religion (one's own as well as that of others) and in replacing the worse interpretation of another's religion by its best interpretation. But this solution is based on the new understanding of religion which Gandhi offered. The trouble with this new understanding of religion is that it cannot be had in isolation. A proper understanding of religion is not possible except in the context of a radically new structure of society different from the present structure. Gandhi's own efforts to bring about communal harmony and world unity as well as his attempts to understand the true nature of religion, must therefore be seen as part and parcel of his life's mission which was to give a new turn to the very course of human civilization.

### *His religious philosophy*

There is a distinctive character to Gandhi's idea of religion. Every evening after the prayer meeting he used to discuss problems: political, economic, social as well as religious, with the members of the community. For him, life was one whole and it cannot be divided into water tight compartments such as political, religious, etc. A true religious person has to be religious always and everywhere and he cannot put up with injustice anywhere. Thus his entire conception of religion was an integrated one. Reli-

gion is meant for the reformation of life. That is why Gandhi said, "my religion is ethical religion."

This does not mean Gandhi rejected the existing particular religions. Nor did he deny the essential elements of any religion, i.e., creed, cult and code. He was ready to tolerate any religious doctrine, even if unreasonable, if it was not immoral. But he would fight tooth and nail those religious doctrines which are in conflict with morality. The same holds true regarding cults as well. He would not object to any form of worship which is not immoral. Ultimately the creed and cult are meant for a better code of conduct. Hence if they do not serve this purpose of bettering life, they are no good for religion.

#### *Divine paternity and human fraternity*

Gandhi firmly believed in the common fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. Almost all religions accept this great doctrine. We come from God and we are marching towards him. It is from this presupposition that he goes to the fundamental unity of all religions in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is bound to fail. Unity is encased in a variety of forms. The various forms will persist until the end of time. Wise men will ignore this crust and see the soul beneath the crust. God is one and identical with Truth. Truth is not the exclusive property of any single religion.

Gandhi's struggle for the freedom of India is sometimes raised as an objection to the above stand. He has clarified this. His patriotism was not an exclusive thing. It was all-embracing but he rejected that patriotism which sought to capitalize upon the distress or the exploitation of other nationalities. His patriotism was always consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large. He wanted to realize brotherhood or identity, not merely with the beings that are human, but with all life, even with such beings that crawl on earth, because we claim common descent from the same God. Thus he extended brotherhood to all living beings.

We are all children of the same father whom the Hindu, the Muslim and the Christian know by

different names... The *Allah* of Islam is the same as the *God* of Christians and the *Ishwara* of Hindus... and little man has tried in his humble way to describe mighty God by giving Him attributes. However, He is above all attributes, Indescribable, Inconceivable and Immeasurable. Living faith in this God means acceptance of the brotherhood of mankind. It also means equal respect for all religions.

### *Unity of all religions*

We may call ourselves Christians, Hindus or Muslims. Whatever we may be, beneath the diversity there is oneness and underneath many religions there is *one Religion*. There are many points of contact among these religions. The differences are indeed insignificant. Convinced as he was of this fact, Gandhi had great reverence for all religions and admired their noble manifestations. All religions reveal God and show man the path of liberation. Only the descriptions vary. If there was religious strife, men and not religions were responsible. He exhorted people to live the religions to which they belonged, in truth and in spirit. This will bring about harmony of religions in the world, he said.

Mahatma Gandhi clearly saw the need of the time: people belonging to different faiths must have the same regard for other faiths that they have for their own. It means finding unity in diversity. Just as in Nature, there is a fundamental unity running through all the diversity, so also there is fundamental unity in religions. To discover this underlying unity Gandhi has a master key, i.e., Truth and Nonviolence. As he was a close student of all principal religions, his study revealed to him their basic unity. He not only preached this unity, he lived it in his own daily life. He believed that all men are equal, that they are brothers and members of one family. Differences of skin and race and nation are only transitory and superficial.

Different religions, according to Gandhi, are the different followers of the same garden, or branches of the same tree. Using the same simile he says: "Just as a tree has a million leaves, similarly, though God is one, there are as

many religions as there are men and women though they are rooted in one God... Each mind has a different conception of God from that of the other." However, he did not aim at any fusion of religions. He felt that each religion has some special contribution to make.

*All religions are true*

As he believed in the fundamental unity of all religions, so also Gandhi affirmed that all the great religions of the world are true 'more or less.' The 'more or less' is because religion as conceived by man can never be perfect; perfection being the exclusive attribute of God alone. "If all faiths outlined by man are imperfect, the question of comparative merits does not arise"—says Gandhi. All faiths constitute a revelation of truth. Truth is like the fire at the heart of a many-faced jewel. Each angle shows a different aspect and a different color. Imperfect as we are we can see truth only in fragments and act according to our limited vision. The reality is known only to God. Hence, we must not be like the 'frog in the well' who imagines that the world ends with the walls of the well. We must not think that our religion alone is true and others are all false. A reverent study of other religions would show that they also are as true as our own, though all are necessarily imperfect. Therefore we must entertain the same respect for all faiths. When such an attitude becomes the law of life, the conflicts based on the differences of religion will disappear from the face of the earth.

*All religions are equal*

As in the truth and unity of all religions, Gandhi also believed in the equality of all religions. When he says that all religions are true and equal, he does not necessarily mean to say that 'they are equally true' in religious terms or that they are absolutely true. Another man's religion is true for him, as mine is for me. I cannot be the judge of his religion. We know no two bodies are identical, nor are any two leaves of a tree. There is bound to be some difference. Each one prays to God according to the light he has. How can one pass judgement as to "who prays better? If I am a

seeker of Truth, it is sufficient for me," says Gandhi.

Since there is only one God and there is identity in the essential moral principles of all religions, in theory there can be only one religion. But in fact there are many religions, because men, who are imperfect by nature, interpret these moral principles according to their own temperament, climate and culture.

In theory, since there is only one God, there can be only one religion. But in practice, no two persons I have known have had an identical conception of God. Therefore, there will, perhaps, always be different religions answering to different temperaments and climatic conditions.

The duty towards self, and the relationship with one's neighbors are the same in all religions. What distinguishes religions from one another is their external practice, their liturgy and their formula of prayers. He compared different religions to different roads leading to the same God. "Religions are different roads converging at the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal?" Thus Gandhi concluded that all religions are equal.

The acceptance of the doctrine of equality of religions does not abolish the distinction between religions and irreligion. He says no man can live without religion. Some people may say that they are agnostic and atheists, and that they have nothing to do with religion. He compared them to a man saying that he breathes but he has no nose. According to Gandhi man by nature is religious, and he has to follow a religion. That will lead him to God who rules his every breath.

### *Respect for all religions*

Since all religions have a basic unity, are sharing the same Truth, and are equal, we must cultivate the same respect for all religions. This is possible only if we study all religions with equal-mindedness. We should have no desire to criticize any element of other religions because they are not ours. We must have the humility to confess that we cannot understand everything about a religion. Every

religion has four elements, i.e., mythical, mystical, ethical and theological. It is natural that mythical and mystical elements often remain difficult to understand by reason.

Still, there are many things which one can learn from other religions. Therefore, Gandhi exhorted the people of different religions as follows:

I would advise the Hindus and the Sikhs to read the *Qur'an* as they read the *Gita* and the *Granth Sahib*. To the Muslims, I would say they should read the *Gita* and the *Granth Sahib* with the same reverence with which they read the *Qur'an*. They should understand the meaning of what they read and have equal regard for all religions. This is my life—long practice and ideal.

On another occasion he advised the Hindus:

Leave the Christians alone for the moment. I shall say to the Hindus that your lives will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teachings of Jesus.

To the Missionaries he said:

You, the Missionaries, come to India thinking that you come to a land of heathens, of idolators, of men who do not know God... He (an Indian) is as much a seeker after Truth as you and I are, possibly more so... I tell you there are many poor huts belonging to the untouchables where you will certainly find God. They do not reason but they persist in their belief that God is. They depend upon God for his assistance and find it too... I place these facts before you in all humility for the simple reason that you may know this land better, the land to which you come to serve.

### AUTHENTIC RELIGION AND WORLD UNITY

It is high time that authentic religions should come forward to awaken genuine values in their followers. True religions always stand for truth, love, harmony and peace. These are values which humanity likes, seeks and endeavours to establish. Authentic religion strives towards this goal, rising above narrow historicity, communitarian limi-

tations and ethnically bound realities. Only the element of transcendence can drive man towards the above goal.

The genuine values awakened in the hearts of men can lead them to action of love towards our neighbors. This in turn will bring about communal harmony and world unity. As Gandhi said, the greatness of a religion consists of its capacity to produce great minds, meaning minds capable of accepting and appreciating others.

In the vivid and picturesque scene of final judgment, Christ placed on His right the people who lived a life of service and righteousness. Love and truth is the essence of any moral law. In the story of the good Samaritan, the representative of outcasts, Jesus reinforced the law of love. Further, in the talk with the Samaritan woman Jesus denies any particular place of worship and demands worship in spirit and truth. Hence religion should help men to seek values that are basic and eternal, that will bring men together and thus create a world of love, acceptance and harmony. The following are guiding principles for better interaction among religions:

- a. Promote better understanding of religions, both of one's own and of others.
- b. The deeper understanding of other faiths should lead us to support all in their struggle for self-realization.
- c. Accept men of other faiths as they are and as they want to be instead of imposing your view on others.
- d. Be open to learn from one another. We may have much to offer to others. That is the case with others too. We need a better sharing and dialogue.

## **RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN FORMAL EDUCATION**

Fundamentals of every religion must be included in our school syllabus. They should be taught in such a way that the students will grow in respect for religions and religious values. This requires a fresh and creative type of religious education. The religions should be presented at their best without creating any kind of prejudice against any particular religion. The emphasis should be on the cultivation of appreciation for and understanding of the valuable insights throughout the religious history of

mankind. It is a sad fact that many do not have an adequate knowledge of their own religion, yet they are ready to throw mud at those of others.

There is a grave danger in the proposal made above, if it is not executed with extreme care and caution. Our purpose is to promote eternal religious and moral values and not sectarian attitudes. Hence our aim should be a nonsectarian, value-centered religious instruction so that children can develop respect for all religions. In our present educational system a student is robbed of his full development if he receives no guidance in his early years towards the recognition of the religious aspect of life.

Studies in comparative religion must find more place and scope in our college and university studies. Departments of religious studies can conduct formal, informal and nonformal courses on religions. This is a most forgotten field which needs the most urgent attention of the authorities concerned.

Our people must be taught of religion in an enlightened manner to love one another and to know that God is one for all. They should feel that they are all members of one great family of human beings, having different forms of worship. They are all fellow-pilgrims marching towards the spiritual realization of truth and love. This is the great lesson Mahatma has taught us by his thought and life.

### FOR PRACTICE

#### *Interreligious dialogue*

Interreligious dialogue occurs when committed followers of various religions meet to communicate to each other their religious views, convictions, fears and doubts, their aspirations and hopes. This can be a prayer meeting, a sharing session, a common action, etc. Proper interreligious dialogues can wipe away the curses of racism and religious riots from the face of the earth and can establish better world unity and communal harmony.

#### *Sharing in common enterprises*

Members of different religions can come together and work together for common goals such as nation-building

at the economic, social, cultural and political levels. In our working places of schools, colleges, offices, and factories there is much scope for sharing common enterprises.

### *Sharing common study and reflection*

This is another form of dialogue wherein members of different religions meet for common study and prayerful reflection, on their religious values and experiences, or discuss problems of man in the light of their own religious commitment. This form of dialogue can take place at the levels of ordinary believers, or of scholars, etc. The religious institutions and study centers like colleges and universities must take initiative for this.

### *Sharing common prayer*

The purpose of common prayer is the corporate worship of God, our common Father and Creator. Under the Divine paternity we form one family of mankind. Our Mahatma said: "Congregational prayer is a good means for establishing essential unity through common worship... Prayer is the greatest binding force, making for the solidarity and oneness of the human family. If a person realizes his unity with God through prayer, he will look upon everybody as himself."

### *"Live-together" sessions*

This form of dialogue has proven to be very powerful and fruitful in establishing communal harmony. This gives the best opportunity to experience each other in prayer, study and life.

**II: Part 5**  
**APPROACHES TO WORLD UNITY**  
**THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE *BHAGAVAD-GITA***  
by Prof. K.B. Ramakrishna Rao

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Viewed from the perspective of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the subject of today's discussion, "The Promotion of World Unity," is one of the most important aspects of the general philosophy of *Consolidation* which the *Gita* envisages. The select term for this process of consolidation which the text uses is "*loksamgraha*", whose dimensions pass beyond the ordinary understanding of it. The term has been used variously to convey the senses of "achieving human welfare," "guiding the people not to go the wrong way," "holding together the people, etc. It is scarcely linked with the deeper and wider sinews of reality *against the background of which any human unity or welfare can have meaning*. The perspective of the *Gita* seems to be touching the core of the problem of the universal, or more significantly, of a "*cosmic consolidation*" whose one aspect is promotion of world unity and human welfare. The insight of the *Gita* seems to be to point towards a consolidation at the most basic level, namely, *the unity of all existence*—man and nature, spirit and matter, thought and reality, bearing reflections on all aspects of individual and universal life. The direction that a human being can

get in promoting world union—which we ordinarily take to be one of religious, political or social unity of human beings in the world—becomes easier only with the deeper intuitions of a purpose behind the *Cosmic Consolidation* itself at all levels of existence, the human and the animal, the living and the nonliving, the mental and the material, the concrete and the subtle.

Lord Krishna couches his philosophy in such a way that while outwardly he insists that Arjuna perform his work as is natural to a Kshatriya, the implications are that he is laying bare the secrets of cosmic consolidation that take place at each level of existence, and the human element which is involved is only *an instance of a conscious regent commissioned to quicken or keep up the process of cosmic consolidation*. The cosmic or philosophical import of "*viswarupa darsana*" is that we are all inextricable elements of a larger and planned structure of a Reality which demands us to discover our place in it and to do a job, and do it correctly, efficiently and with the deftness of an artist. In other words, we are asked, being conscious regents, to "participate" (*pravestum* 15.59) in the reality which is a unity far beyond the logical laws of contradiction or superficial distinctions. The individuality that one gains as per this dialectic is *the individuality given to him by a reality only to serve his/its purpose*, and being conscious regents to serve it consciously and with devotion. Arjuna is just one instance in the scheme (11, 33), and so are we! *An individuality that claims a separation from reality sets itself up as an antiforce or parallel movement*, which ultimately awaits a destruction, even as the entire brood of Dhuryodhana awaited destruction working against the Law of Consolidation.

The metaphysical thesis of the Lord is the unity of existence, where the individuals or groups or nations are expected to discover that they have a cosmic role to play, and a cosmic responsibility to fulfill, and by undertaking it only can they serve themselves. What is unique about this is the exhilarating joy of participation in the cosmic theme and function. That itself is the object of realization beyond which there is no further end. In this cosmic participation

an individual's success or failure is metamorphosed into the cosmic success or failure, and a realization of this gives an individual a sense of satisfaction or fulfillment that he has done his job. Success or failure is immaterial, for what is operating is not just the individual but no work is isolated from the cosmic factors which work as though converging on a point: the individual.

The outcome of this analysis of Reality and its implication for the topic on hand is to choose between being antiforces or parallel movements against or with Reality, and being happy participants in the consolidation that is taking place of all elements—conscious and unconscious—in the scheme that can be called Divine. To choose the former is to be wasted away as insignificant material ("*mogham partha sa jivati* etc." 3.16), and to choose the latter is to get the credit for having understood the theme and for having served it. Man's role comes in the latter choice. How to do it is elaborated by the Lord in terms of *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Karma* yogas.

If human activity that is directed towards achieving world unity is philosophy, it should consist of unravelling man's relationship with the rest of existence and of intimating the necessity of a choiceless participation; and if it is religion, it should consist of practicing this relationship in life. The mission of the *Gita* is thus to awaken in us this sense of cosmic relationship and of the necessity of realizing it in life.

Naturally then, if each individual has a place and a relevant part in the scheme of things, there is added a natural dignity to each pursuit: philosophical, scientific, religious, social or cultural. There is actually a spiritual socialism or secularism which respects all faiths and creeds, all pursuits and professions, however sophisticated or low they may be. The "tolerance" that we often speak of among religions and faiths, and among different peoples, becomes superficial if this inner secret is not understood. The rationale of the Lord in accepting services in whatever manner they are offered and from whatever persons they may come forth, to be of equal importance lies in this deep-rooted cosmic philosophy which

relates individuals and peoples with a central theme, the Divine (7.21). World unity on the basis of religion and philosophy cannot justify itself, if this basic relationship is forgotten. Each mode of worship and each mode of pursuit is directed to serving the same end, and none is inferior to the other, for each is the expression of a cosmic function and a mode of operation. Shall we say this understanding of the *Gita*, for which one "*dharma*" is not the enemy of another "*dharma*", but the enemy is only "*adhharma*?" And, which "*dharma*", i.e. religion, wishes to call itself "*adhharma*".

When the dignity of the human individual is restored not on any political instrument of franchise or acceptance of a social equality, but on the basic foundation as an element in the cosmic theme working for consolidations, the prospect of world unity is assured, otherwise, no. A United Nations conceived on a superficial equality of nations was bound to be a failure and has failed. Where it does not take into cognizance the elementary rights of human beings to live, and a population is allowed to be obliterated on considerations of race or religion under a merciless militarism or by power politics the *cosmic link* is forgotten, and the world unity enacted thus becomes a meaningless sophistry. A social, political or economic rehabilitation of mankind is to be based at the level of the heart, and the understanding that helps it is the recognition of the individual as the divine. It is not sympathy that an individual expects but a duty towards him. He is a co-traveller in the pursuit, nay, a co-ordinate element in the cosmic theme.

The perspective of the *Gita* in this regard is straight, and the pointed words of the Lord reflect this clearly: "who so ever sees Me in all, and all in Me" is the "yogi" and is "dearest to Me!" The conception of a Divine Community of Beings where individuals have a dignity of being, where being is not simply individual and local but cosmic, where participation is determined on the exercise of natural functions, where choice and mode of pursuit are free, and where "results" and "aims of success" do not matter, is something unsurpassed and worth considering, as it is found on a philosophy of a "cosmic consolidation."

If the world unity has not been achieved it is because

we have disconnected ourselves from the roots of Reality. In other words a disunity among men and nations—on whatever ground it might be—is not simply a disunity at the human level, but is the expression of a deeper malady, namely a disconnection from the Cosmos. Our anger, hatred, sorrow or fear either at the individual or at the group level exists fundamentally because we try to sail off jettisoning our relationship with a wider structure of reality of which we are a part and from which we draw our sap of life. There is a danger of extinction here, if we do not awaken to our essential links with the stalk and the roots. Arjuna's is one such case, and Krishna asks him to link himself up with the Cosmic Law—this is "yoga", technically, which is operating at any level and at any instant but hidden from our common understanding. Yoga is absorption, it is *participation in the Cosmic Life with Love and joy*.

Now we have come to the last point regarding the "human" unity, i.e. *why* it should be achieved. The *how* of it is answered already.

The philosophy of Cosmic consolidation is based on the dialectics of a self-regenerative "sacrifice" or "*yajna*", and if we have any cue in this, we should clearly see how the Infinite Reality maintains itself. As infinity or Infinite Reality is at each point of existence, so humanity lives in each man and awaits a response conducive to the upkeep of humanity. It is humanity fulfilling itself as man, and man fulfilling himself as humanity. And who knows if the reality called *humanity* is making a demand on you, me and everybody not only to raise the "stock" of the whole, but also to give a direction to the understanding how Infinity is consolidating itself. World unity, then, is a necessity for the survival not of mankind alone, but is so even from the larger perspective of a cosmic theme with which humanity is involved and wherein humanity has a function, and in achieving it humanity finds its fulfillment.

No country has been more blessed than India in the matter of inheriting the ripest of wisdom of the type we find in the *Gita*, and no person has greater responsibility to imbibe and practice this spirit of Cosmic consolidation than an Indian.

SECTION D  
SELECTED PAPERS

THE GLOBAL CONGRESS  
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

# I

## THE GCWR: A POSITION PAPER

by Dr. J. Gordon Melton

In this paper someone on the periphery of the Global Congress attempts to step into the shoes of its board members and speak as a voice on the inside.

### APOLOGIA

I speak as one whose adult life has been dominated by and lived in the interface of the variety of religions in America and the world. The realization of that interface came in my family where Methodists, Southern Baptists, Primitive Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals existed in a tolerated truce. As I grew older and encountered not only the variety of Christians but those of other religions as well I came to know that the intensifying of the dialogue between religious leaders and members of all faiths is one of the crying needs of our world today. I have been involved in other interfaith endeavors and have watched some modest success but much more failure in handling the vital issues and forces of interfaith communication with any degree of skill and sophistication.

Thus I welcomed the word that the Global Congress was to be formed. It offers the best possibility on the horizon of realizing many of the dreamed for goals of the past decades. While having no official position with the Congress and its board of trustees, I strongly identify with the vision that brought it into existence. Thus I speak as both

the hopeful outsider eager that the Congress accomplish its self-assigned task and an insider already identified with the on-going efforts on its behalf.

This statement is personal—directed to the present members of the board of the GCWR and through them to the potential members and the future participants in the Congress' activities. It attempts to clarify a perspective and point a direction; it is offered with the passion of a true believer and yet is given freely to the Congress to use, abuse, change, distort or toss as it sees fit.

### FORMATION/DEFINITION

The Global Congress of the World's Religions was formed in November 1980 as a place and a space where men and women of many differing religious perspectives can come together and share one another's life and experience and act upon mutual concerns. Having developed out of the vision of a few, it seeks to become global in its outlook and to steadily increase its circle of involvements.

While many "interfaith" efforts have come and gone in the past, the members of the GCWR know that interfaith activity on a global scale is a necessary aspect of religious activity in our generation. We are therefore committed to transcend the limitations of the past and reach to the possibilities of the future.

We accept the fact that the conditions of the world demand we act, that as responsible religious leaders we speak to one another and to the world, and that we call upon our colleagues to join us. The international problems of hunger, racism, religious persecution, the spread of technology, the monumental increase of population, the proliferation of power weapons in the hands of larger and larger armies, and the need for a reclarification of the values common to the race impinge upon life to the degree that religious leadership can neglect to speak to them and act upon them only to humanity's detriment.

### THE AGOURA

As a Congress we do not come forth to establish hege-

mony over the life of humanity, but to establish within our human context an opening through which humanity can move to its own future better equipped to understand itself and to affirm those values that tie individuals together: respect, compassion, integrity, fidelity and patience in the face of adversity. We activate those structures that bring people together—bridges of understanding, skyscrapers of tolerance and conduits of communication.

Thus the GCWR will be neither a debating society, a haven for a few academics nor a place for the already religious to search for the possible common denominators of the religious life. It shall be a place of study, of life, of activity. It will be an *agoura* where all shall be welcome to come and bring the jewels of their faith. Once together, in our places of meeting, we will not hide our jewels, but show to one another the things most valuable to us. We will continually learn anew that people of faith are most empowered and creative when they speak and act out of deeply held convictions and spiritual insights. We ask not that they be put aside but put to use in the common cause.

The Congress will be a *forum* for study and application. We will work together to discover the spiritual affirmations and moral values to give to the world and its leaders and will establish specific programs and thrusts to apply those affirmations and values in the life of people. Thus the Congress will be a "global village square" where the residents of town and country will assemble in a creative ferment of social, cultural and spiritual dialogue.

The Congress must embody in its own life the possibilities it offers to others. In organization and program it shall be its own best *model* of cooperation, communication, compassion and celebration. It shall be artistic without neglecting the encounter with technology. It shall be open in its celebration without running roughshod over the sacred space of its members. It shall watch that in its drive, to aid the world in its problems that the joy of the spirit that animates shall not depart from it.

As an organization, the Congress will raise its *tent of meeting* regularly in the oasis of life to bring the tribes of humankind to the table of deliberation and resolution. We

will affirm our heartfelt conviction that the history of the human race is a common story.

## THE PAST

The GCWR inherits and affirms the long history of interfaith encounter that took a decided turn from missionary assault to mutual respect and dialogue in 1893 at the World Parliament of Religion in Chicago. We see ourselves standing in the tradition created by that parliament and the many organizations, conferences and dedicated individuals that it inspired. We also seek to transcend the shortcomings of previous interfaith efforts that have had a relatively small audience and which have only begun to produce the desired effect of promoting toleration, understanding and respect among members of various religious groups.

In examining the previous efforts of interreligious cooperation and programming—several obvious barriers loom before us as major road blocks. They may be summarized under four headings:

1. Concentration on low priority concerns
2. Lack of grass roots support
3. Theological naivete concerning religious differences
4. Too narrow a focus

### *1. Concentration on Low Priority Concerns*

Many interfaith and ecumenical efforts have found their focus in the commonly held beliefs of most religions. Such beliefs include the oneness of humanity (i.e., brotherhood), worship of a supreme deity, the broadening experience of meeting with someone different (togetherness for its own sake). At first glance these beliefs are sound, reasonable and noble. Few would dissent. However, they are vague and abstract, and function at some distance from religious passions.

When viewed on a functional level, these propositions are far from the central matters that inspire and hold religious devotion. The religious life is built around a piety that acknowledges Jesus as Lord, the Truth heard from the lips of the Prophet, the experience of satori and samadhi,

the discovery of a new identity as a result of having become aligned with a definite religious perspective, or the salvation from the "world" in a deep conversion. Out of the religious experience (and we note that religious experience "in general" does not exist in the real world, only particular religious experiences) and piety of the different faiths come the moral imperatives, prophetic insights, and saintly lives we look for.

If we call people together under the few common beliefs of religious life, we in effect distract people from those factors that have truly empowered their religious expressions, and in many cases, we threaten the religious life itself by placing ourselves over against the depth of faith.

GCWR must so structure itself as to invite, celebrate and make a central place for the particularities of the faith of its members. There must be room to share the salvation that comes in Jesus and the enlightenment being spread by the Buddha; there must be room to chant "Hare Krishna" and "Om" and to hear the voice of the Orthodox cantor's lament; our ears must register the beat of the African drum as well as the strains of the pipe organ and the steel guitar; our spirits must look into the mystic light and our ears strain to hear the other voice of the Spiritualist medium; we must clear space for the dancers before the Great Mother and for the children of the Prophet to spread their prayer rugs.

In so doing we will accept religion at its heart and accept people of faith in and with their faith. We thus call on one another not to abandon faith, or change faith but to move to the highest our faith envisions for us.

To accept plurality on this level is qualitatively different from an approach asking people to set aside their own peculiarities for the sake of a few common goals and values. The suggested course of action affirms that we find the best in human attainment in and through the particular and peculiar distinctives of religious faiths and the differing emphases they project. This approach also assumes in a radical manner that no one path of action will be suitable for everyone, that the differences of contemplatives, bureaucrats and the activists are mutually supportive of

the whole, not competitive paths to be evaluated against each other. The spiritual realm is a flower garden, not a sea of sameness.

## *2. Lack of Grass Roots Support*

Interfaith dialogue can proceed on several levels—with a focus on scholars, religious administrators, clergy or lay people. In the past, interfaith structures have tended to concentrate upon scholarly dialogue, rarely moving to include religious administrators and even more rarely seeking to involve clergy and laity as such. Unfortunately scholarly discourse allows much room for impersonal speech, and psychological distance can be maintained. Thus scholars open few avenues to their communities of faith by academic interfaith dialogue. While affirming the vital necessity of such dialogue, on a practical level, it needs continual financial support and produces no immediate and direct return to the religious communities that initially support the scholars.

The support of religious administrators, from bishops to convention presidents to board and agency heads to delegated representatives becomes absolutely necessary to the success of any ecumenical organization. They hold the power in those organizations to which most religious people give their primary allegiance. If administrators are excited and involved in interfaith work, they bring financial and programmatic support. If they see an interfaith activity becoming competitive they can block support, as they tend to be children of the organization that created their job and hence protective of it. The GCWR needs to so structure its growth that religious administrators are immediately brought into the active part of program planning.

Finally, the clergy and laity, those who make up local congregations and assemblies should be the people we ultimately hope to reach. Change, religiously lies in their hands and both scholars and administrators can be slowed or even stopped if they receive no support from the local leadership. The changes envisioned by the Global Congress must also receive their support if they are to be enacted.

The Berkeley (California) Interfaith Council has al-

ready demonstrated the possibility and benefit of interfaith cooperation on the local level. The GCWR should move immediately to foster the creation of similar structures in other metropolitan areas. Besides providing channels through which the Congress can implement its international programs, the practical benefits to the Congress are immense. These local groups would supply both directly and indirectly financial support to the international body. When programming is planned for a particular area, they would supply the local committee to implement arrangements. They also provide the necessary reaction base for actions taken by the Congress. During the period when the GCWR is still building its financial base, they can begin and carry through on programs that we can only dream about.

### 3. *Naivete on Religious Differences*

In the past, interfaith activities—those beyond mere getting together to learn about each other—have tended to minimize the actual differences between religions. Anyone trying to write an ecumenical statement knows that there is almost no statement on religious matters that someone religious will not object to. Among the deeply religious there are those who strongly object to the proposition that all humans are one family, or that there is a Supreme Deity, or that even interfaith activity is of value. As a Congress, we err if we assume the posture that all religions are one—or the equally debatable position—that there is a core of religious belief that all truly religious people hold in common. The more broadly based arena for agreement and affirmations tend to be over shared questions and concerns rather than beliefs. We come together to share our various insights and perspectives—not to reach consensus on the theological and religious questions or to find and create a unity to those problems—that are of common concern and which demand an answer. Thus we can affirm that we do not have to demand theological agreement before we begin to work together to relieve human suffering. While acknowledging our differences, we can proceed to deal with the pressing concerns of human life.

From personal experience, I have viewed how at least one ecumenical body models for us the way we can treat

the unresolvable differences that will surely arise. The Evanston (Illinois) Ecumenical Action Council had several groups within it that wished to explore and act upon ideas that both lacked general interest and in one case was a matter of grave dissent by the majority of Council members. The one case involved an on-going dialogue/action program by a group who had accepted liberation (a Marxist based) theology. The Council did not wish to speak positively on this issue but, at the same time, was able to allow the group to function as a task force that carried on its program under the Council umbrella. It frequently brought matters of particular interest to the Council and generally, to this day, has operated in an atmosphere of acceptance of motivation on a personal level while members of the Task Force and Council agreed to disagree. They learned to live with an unresolvable difference. The Council still is somewhat hostile to liberation theology, but most would agree that the tangible results of the Task Force's actions over the past decade have been much more positive than negative.

The differences in perspective become all the more visible when one begins to actually look beyond the major religious labels that we give sects of believers (Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, etc.) to the actual organizations that make up the major faiths (there are close to 1,000 Christian bodies in North America alone) and the extreme variety manifested there. Besides the so-called major faiths, there are thousands of different, neo-conventional and other minority faiths, all of which contribute to the world religious scene.

The issue of actual religious diversity raises the question for us of representation both formal and informal. Stated in "Christian" terms Catholics do not speak for Baptists who do not speak for Pentecostals who do not speak for Quakers. Ritualists do not speak for free church worshippers and trinitarians do not speak for Apostolics. The Orthodox do not speak for the non-Orthodox be they Monophysite, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science or Kabbalistic.

While there is always area for convergence among different religions, and area for classifying sets of reli-

gious organizations as the "same" in essence, we will do ourselves harm if we overlook the genuine differences within the religious community and leave a sect of religions out because they do not accept as a representative the one we have selected.

#### 4. *Too Narrow a Focus*

Many interfaith groups have failed by adopting a program of too narrow concern. This problem does not seem to haunt the GCWR at present. The more expansive our vision and concern, the more people will find a home with us. The diversity of interest, structure, programs and topics of consideration by the GCWR will go far to insure our future.

### MEMBERSHIP

Members of the GCWR come from many lands—India, Ceylon, Japan, Togo, Israel, England, the United States—to mention a few. They are Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Christians, others. About things religious—there is little about which we agree—but in coming together we have grown, in ways often inexplicable, but we have added depth to faith and have broadened our perception of the world. We have found a common bond—a mutually shared sense of responsibility for the global family living in an increasingly smaller world. We see a need to bring a moral perspective and spiritual vision to the global village. We are increasingly propelled out of the parochialisms within which we were raised.

As a body we do not seek to mold ourselves into a single faith, to blend all religions into a uniformity of either faith or practice. Some of our members believe such blending is both possible and desirable, but as a body we celebrate our pluralism and the possibilities such pluralism offers. We do not seek to convert each other, though some members undoubtedly feel the world would be a better place if all accepted their faith. We do expose ourselves, and our most tender and vulnerable parts in the dialogue with that which is different, thus risking all we hold dear.

The GCWR is not a political organization. It has no desire to meddle in the affairs of national governments. It

seeks rather to speak to the mind and spirit of the religious community and offer its insights on issues of importance political or otherwise. Where it does not choose to speak, it encourages its members to come forward and articulate their concerns individually. As a voice of hope and compassion, it appeals to the moral conscience and spiritual heart of the world's leaders and the centers of the world's power on behalf of humanity.

The GCWR is not a legislative council that will impose its rules and wishes upon its members. It seeks no power over its members; rather it seeks to empower its members through the spirit that enlivens its voice. It intends to create an environment of ferment within the soul of its members that will lead to a desire to transcend the present and act upon the future.

We are a forum for the religious community. We invite delegates from all religious bodies, both official and unofficial. We have a special responsibility and opportunity to seek out the leaders of non-Western, particularly third world, churches and religious groups and offer them a platform they would otherwise be denied. Creating space for them to offer their leadership to the world will be one important act justifying the GCWR's existence.

In opening space in our midst we must also not neglect those individuals who will never be positioned to represent a religious body, yet who speak from the heart of the religious life—the prophets, the activists, the few whose authority comes from sanctified living, or the lay person with a vision to share.

## THE FUTURE

The Global Congress now takes its first steps. These important steps set our pace, and determine how the world will view us and the level of success that we can expect in reaching our goals. We must be both bold to act and thoughtful to measure our steps.

Upon the new history we begin. Let us take care that from the first we set in motion, if only symbolically, *all* we intend for the future. Let us seek to support our own program and allow its support to grow out of the merits of

its accomplishments. While being responsive to the whole religious community, let us be flexible so that at appropriate moments we can mirror its concerns, speak for it to the world, and speak to it the words it should hear.

## II

### OVERCOMING RELIGIOUS CONFLICT —A HINDU APPROACH

by Seshagiri Rao

A prominent feature of our times is the unprecedented mingling of peoples of different races, cultures and religious traditions on a global scale. This phenomenon has brought to the attention of thinking people all over the world the inescapable fact of interdependence of peoples and the solidarity of humankind. Although religious seers and prophets have all along upheld the essential unity of the human race, it has nevertheless taken a long time for humankind to arrive at even a notional acknowledgement of that unity. In the secular world, this has come about partly as a result of the holocausts of two world wars, and is being reinforced now by the instant communication of worldwide news. But the problems that threaten human solidarity are not merely political and economic; they also arise from certain basic religious and spiritual attitudes.

On the religious front, confrontation has given place to contact; there is a move from mutual recrimination to religious conversation. The multireligious situation of our times has made interreligious dialogue a serious concern. The pressure of pluralistic societies compel us to look at our respective religious traditions in the light of others. They demand an examination of our attitudes to peoples of other faiths. Indeed, we are passing through a process of self-searching, self-criticism, and self-understanding. We

are witnesses to and participants in this rethinking process.

Physicians are supposed to cure and not spread disease. Religious traditions are not supposed to spread hatred and violent conflict against one another. They are meant to be forces of reconciliation. In practice though, they have often functioned and still function as divisive forces. They have stressed sectarian trends, and they have raised walls of separation between peoples. But such parochial attitudes cannot satisfy humankind as a whole in the present day world. Rivalry between religions is disastrous to all of them; it obscures their real teachings.

The time has come for world religions to make a new departure. Confronted as they are with fundamental problems of human survival and destiny, they have both the responsibility and the opportunity to cooperate with one another in the promotion of human community and well-being. There are differences between them and will continue to be, and they need to be respected and preserved. They should rather strive to better themselves as instruments of human welfare than indulging in mutual bickering.

Traditional theology, developed in religious isolation, has now become inadequate, if not obsolete; it does not permit the different religious traditions to live side by side in friendly cooperation. Religious conflict has become tragic and pointless; no single religious tradition can expect to displace all the other religions. As far as we can see, human community will continue to be religiously pluralistic. Each religion should come to terms with this fact, and attempt to do justice to the religious experience of mankind as a whole. By a deep and a thorough investigation of its respective heritage, each tradition should open up a new spiritual horizon hospitable to the faiths of other people. The future usefulness of any religious tradition depends on its ability to cooperate with other traditions.

There are universal teachings and extensive resources in each tradition that can bind divisions and build bridges of understanding. By releasing these universal moral and spiritual insights, human fellowship can and must be fostered. For what serious significance can a particular tradition have when human existence itself loses all

meaning? Unless harmonious relationships based on mutual reverence are developed among the great religions of humankind, none of them can hope to be a fit instrument for promoting and sustaining human community and fellowship.

The chief problem facing us today is the reconciliation of humankind. Religions of the world are challenged to apply their resources to its resolution. History poses challenges, and if we restate our old principles in new ways, it is not because we will to do so, but because we must. Such a restatement of the truths of eternity in the accents of our times is needed in every tradition for it to be of living value.

As inhabitants of this planet, the adherents of different faiths are bound by a common destiny. Loyalty to our respective traditions should not undermine our loyalty to the human community. Religious commitment should not become confinement in a system of thought and culture. Each tradition has to take a global view of things and realize the implications of interdependence in the moral and spiritual realms also. To preserve and enrich the quality of life for all human beings is the common responsibility of all religious traditions. Indeed, multireligious dialogue and cooperation have become a necessity to move towards this end.

Not only is the world religiously pluralistic, but each great tradition is also pluralistic. Speaking of my own tradition, Hinduism is one of the most pluralistic religions in the world; there are diverse forms of belief and practice in it. We have the Vaishnavas, the Saivas and the Saktas. There are Hindu sects which stress self-effort and others which depend on grace alone to attain spiritual liberation. Hinduism recognizes six orthodox schools of philosophy; there are schools which recognize realism and those which uphold extreme forms of idealism. Hindu community accepts all of them as religious options available within the tradition. Similarly in the context of world religions, it recognizes the validity of each religious tradition.

Reverence for the faith of other people has been an essential element in the Hindu spiritual vision. The tradi-

tion respects all prophets and sages who have come to guide humanity. Hindus have tried through the ages to give expression to an ecumenical spirit in religious matters. They believe that the great religions are not only relevant but also necessary in the context of the diversity of human needs; each of them addresses a felt need in the spiritual progress of humanity. They do not wish that any tradition should be undermined or eliminated. They hold that at its deepest and best, each tradition constitutes a precious part of the religious heritage of humanity. They appreciate various forms of sincere worship and are willing to learn from others.

Hinduism justifies religious pluralism and its validity on the bases of the twin principles of spiritual competence (*adhikara*) and chosen form of Deity (*Istadevata*). Some religious insights and practice appeal to some persons, while others catch the imagination of other personality types. Accordingly, one and the same form of worship or practice is not recommended to all persons. Different sects cater to a diversity of temperament and capacity.

Very early in their history, the idea became popular with the Hindus that God, with different names and worshipped in different places and forms is not in fact, different. A verse in the Rgveda declares: "Truth is one, and sages call it different names." This idea of one Reality manifesting in many forms helped the cultural synthesis between Aryan and Dravidians in ancient times. Not only the Dravidian gods like Rudra-Siva and Vishnu win acceptance but, in course of time, become supreme.

The Upanishads accord recognition to alternative ways of conceiving the Supreme Being. *Brhadaranyaka* and *Chandogya* conceive the highest reality in impersonal terms whereas *Katha*, *Mundaka*, and *Svetasvatara* conceive the Supreme Being as personal. The rest of the Upanishads accept both conceptions as valid. This is an important breakthrough; it allows Hindus to be at home with those traditions that are monistic as well as with those that are theistic. During the age of the systems, when six schools of philosophy came into prominence, all of them were accepted by each of them as orthodox. The *Bhagavad-Gita* has given

classical expression to this attitude:

Whatever form one desires to worship in faith and devotion, in that very form I make that faith of his secure. (VII. 21)

Even those who are devoted to other gods and worship them in full faith, even they O Kaunteya, worship none but Me. (IX. 23)

In what ever way men resort to Me, even so do I render to them; in every way O Partha, the path followed is Mine. (IV. 23)

Throughout history, Hindus have received with friendliness the followers of other religions, who sought shelter in India from time to time to escape persecution in their own homelands. After the second destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, the Jews who came to India were received warmly and were allowed to practice their faith in their own way. Within a century of the crucifixion of Christ, the Syrian church of Christianity could find a place and carry on its activities freely in South India. Syrian Christians constitute a flourishing and a respected community in Kerala even today. And when Muslims invaded Persia, the remnants of the Zoroastrian community left their homes and came to India. They were provided with the necessary facilities to establish their own modes of religious worship. Hindus met the Muslim traders with hospitality, and there were many happy contacts with Muslim countries long before the actual political invasions of Muslim rulers. We have also the very recent example of India offering shelter and hospitality to the Dalai Lama and his followers who came to India to escape communist repression and persecution. India was aware of the serious repercussions of this act in her relations with the Peoples Republic of China. Yet I remember the conclusive argument of Dr. Radhakrishnan (at that time Vice-President of India): "We cannot go against our culture and heritage," and that settled the debate.

Hinduism is a philosophy and a way of life to guide its followers in moral and spiritual matters, affirmations such as *sattyannasti parodharmah* there is no higher

*dharma* than truth; and *ahimsa paramodharmah*, non violence is the highest virtue, give the bases for the regulation of Hindu life and conduct. Mahatma Gandhi described Hinduism as a "search for truth through nonviolent means." Hindus look upon the world as *dharmaksehra*, the field of moral and spiritual endeavors. Therefore, they seek to support similar endeavors of the people in other faiths.

Hinduism teaches the unity of being, which implies that all the things in the universe are knit together in that which is the common basis of all existence. Spirituality probes this underlying unity of life and aims at universal well-being. It gives the philosophical root of nonviolence or love. It encourages a way of life where the individual is enabled to live in tune with the Infinite. It asks people to transcend the barriers that their little egos have erected around themselves.

Human life is plagued by the conflict between the divine and the demonic, egoism and altruism. This inner conflict is the basis of external disharmonies. Harmony outside cannot be achieved without achieving the integration of personality. The true self is liberated and united with God only when we have completely freed ourselves from all selfish attachment.

There are important differences as well as similarities between religious traditions. Since differences are important, and in some cases unbridgeable, no uncritical syncretism (*dharmasankara*) is entertained. While marvelling at the uniqueness of each religious tradition, Hindus appreciate the enrichment that comes from religious diversity. Each tradition is valued for the differences it brings to the human community. It makes them humble and prevents a sense of complacency and self-sufficiency in their own beliefs and practices.

Religious differences cannot be understood until we appreciate the similarities among the traditions. By focusing on the resemblances, we are able to see human religiousness in its varied forms and contrast it with a purely secular way of life. The inculcation of moral and spiritual values brings all religions together. The "Golden Rule," in one form or the other, and the injunction to tran-

scend egoism are present in all of them. They all believe that man's relation to man is more important than man's relation to material things. When we wish to grow in partnership, we should work for a healthy harmony (*samavaya*), while appreciating the differences. We are not surrendering our differences when we talk of unity.

The conception of unity behind diversity has been a fundamental factor in Hindu religious consciousness. It springs from a concern for truth and value wherever they are found. The appreciation of and the willingness to learn from the other traditions is the keynote of the Hindu attitude. Hindus accept the Bible, the Qu'ran, and the scriptures of other religions, along with the Vedas, as the word of God. Our purpose in dialogue should not be the elimination of differences, but the appreciation of each other's faith leading to a cooperative endeavor in overcoming injustice, violence, war and irreligion and in promoting morality and spirituality.

The essential aspiration of religions is for reconciliation, human fellowship and peace. By awakening the spiritual consciousness of humanity, we can establish moral order in human society. Spiritual traditions of the world should, therefore, stand together and work for the greater glory of God and greater happiness of mankind.

**III**  
**STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT**  
**OF INTERRELIGIOUS ATTITUDES**  
by Archie J. Bahm

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The attitudes of each person as he becomes acquainted with other religions often change. The attitudes of people grouped as adherents to one religion often change as they become acquainted with other religions. The fact of such changes, psychologically and historically, is well known. But that changes tend to progress through several typical stages is not so well known. The purpose of this article is to present the hypothesis that interreligious attitudes do tend to change in certain typical ways and that at least twelve different stages can be distinguished in a typical evolutionary process if it is carried to completion. The stages are:

1. *Ignorance*. People in some religions have been, and doubtless are, unaware of the existence of other religions. These are not now warring, of course, but, if our hypothesis is correct, and if they are of a kind which will go through all of its proposed typical stages, their troubles are still ahead of them, and the total

process for mankind as a whole may be slowed by their starting late.

2. *Curiosity.* When a person discovers the existence of one or more other religions, he is at first surprised. He tends to react to the discovery with wonder and curiosity. How much curiosity one will have or how long he will remain merely curious is something difficult to generalize about. If the person making observations about another religion feels sure about and secure in his own views, he may dismiss such differences as insignificant, thereby regarding the other religion as insignificant. But if such person is, or becomes, uncertain about his views, awareness of differences may appear as a threat to his assurance. Then his curiosity may not last very long.
3. *Intolerance.* To a person at home in a particular ideology, any challenge to such ideology appears as a threat to his home and to his self. When he has come to believe that the tenets of his religion are true, those who disagree with such truth tend to be thought of as more inimical than those who fall short in practice. The infidel is often judged to be worse than the sinner. When this is so, the dutiful religious person seeks to protect his religion from attack. His first response, that of fear, may lead him to attack, and to try to eliminate, the other religion. Often such elimination is not possible, and attack causes the other to defend and to counterattack. As fear grows, an attitude of intolerance increases. We cannot review here the long history of kinds of religious intolerance, but surely its many forms and degrees are well known. Death, exile, torture, persecution, restriction, slavery, discrimination, taxation, and boycott have all been used. Sometimes different beliefs are tolerated but not public practice or teaching.
4. *Accommodation.* When two people of different religions are forced to live together, where they interact by using the same streets, markets, factories, government, and even houses, each tends to accept, somewhat unwillingly, the fact that the other's religion does exist and

- will probably continue to exist. Each regards the views of the other as false or inferior, even when granting him the right to live and practice his own beliefs provided he does not interfere with the rights of others. Neither studies the views of the other. Neither believes he has anything of significance to learn from the other. Each ignores the other as much as he can and tends to keep to himself when practicing and expounding his own doctrines.
5. *Encounter*. After a person lives side by side with a person having another religion for a long time, he gradually tends to recognize that the other religion has a kind of substantiality about it, not just in the sense that it persists but in the sense that it persists because it serves needs. That is, each recognizes that the other religion has value, even though he regards it as inferior. "Encounter" signifies recognition of co-existence, co-continuance, and competition, at least for peripheral membership and support. "Encounter" does not imply enmity necessarily, though enmity in some degree seems normal. But it does imply awareness both of obstinate otherness and of competition of a sort which, sooner or later, needs to be met. Encounter, as awareness of substantial competitiveness, may or may not be accompanied by inquiry.
  6. *Inquiry*. Then comes a second kind of curiosity. This is not merely about the existence of something different and of what the differences are, but a curiosity about how the other religion serves the needs of its members and why it appeals to its members and continues to do so in a substantial way. What are its doctrines? What are its values to its members? A certain amount of open-mindedness is needed in order to try to understand the other religion. But such inquiry does not pre-suppose a willingness on the part of the inquirer to change his own views. One may study the other religion in order to discover its deficiencies, weaknesses, shortcomings, so as to defeat it, or win it over, or demonstrate its inferiority. When this is the case, inquiry is really an extension of the encounter, and one in which

it is believed that understanding the other religion will improve one's chances of competing with it.

7. *Softening.* Inquiry, especially if it be open-minded, usually results in awareness of some good features in the other religion, even though they may be regarded as incidental, inferior, accidental, or even with an attitude of wonder how it is possible for an inferior religion to be so good. This stage, called "softening" for want of a better term, involves the beginnings of appreciation of the good points in the other religion. Such appreciation may or may not be accompanied by a criticism of the inquirer's religion. But inquiry is likely to involve comparisons, and when one begins to appreciate another religion, he almost automatically begins a reexamination of his own. Softening is, of course, a matter of degree and is a process which may go on for a long time. Inquiry and softening may or may not involve dialogue which, I suggest, is the next typical stage.
8. *Dialogue.* By "dialogue" I do not here mean angry disputation which may occur at the second, third, fourth, fifth, and even sixth stages. By "dialogue" I mean conversation in which one, at least, and preferably both persons, is seeking to learn something of value from the other. "Dialogue" involves a willingness to change one's views, even though he may not in fact change them during or as a result of such conversation. One of the purposes of dialogue is possible increase in appreciation as well as understanding of the other religion. A dialogue may fail in its purposes. One may, as a result, come to depreciate rather than appreciate, and to misunderstand rather than understand, as a result of dialogue. But dialogue has a tendency to improve both understanding and appreciation by both participants.
9. *Modification.* As appreciation of the values of the other religion grows, one tends to modify his attitude toward the other religion. Such modification may include a willingness to approve some ideas, or some practices, or both, without a willingness to adopt them, though it may also lead to adoption of some of them. Modification

is, also, a matter of degree. Since we are thinking in terms of evolutionary stages, this stage may be seen as one within which much development may take place, or in which development may occur over a long period of time. Although these stages are being described primarily from the point of view of one religion, ecumenism can hardly be achieved without mutual modification at least part of the time. It may be that one religion is actually so superior that modification is all in one direction. But my own experience with existing religions is that they all have values and that each has something to gain from the others. Hence, mutual modification, i.e., where each of two religions borrows something that is appreciated from the other, may be regarded as representing a more advanced stage than one-way modification.

10. *Cooperation.* By "cooperation" is meant acting willingly in the pursuit of common ends. Cooperation of unwilling sorts may occur at earlier stages, and willing cooperation of minor sorts may also occur. Some minimum of cooperation is needed in order to carry on dialogue. The present stage is characterized by a mutual recognition of worthiness, and of a sharing of some common goals and of the worthwhileness of acting together to achieve those goals. Cooperation may involve very little modification, but it requires enough modification by each so that it changes from having a noncooperative attitude to having a cooperative attitude. Cooperation may be either of the sort where both seek some value external to both of them or of the sort where values are exchanged. This stage, too, may be prolonged and may progress from cooperating in few things to cooperating in many, and from remaining only a little modified to becoming greatly modified.
11. *Partial emergence.* Sometimes two religions appreciate each other, modify themselves mutually and cooperate so much that they sometimes serve each other's members equally; that is, some members receive as much benefit from the one as from the other. When this happens, emergence, ranging from partial to complete, may

- occur. This represents interreligious ecumenism in its final stage, so far as the two religions are concerned.
12. *Progressive synthesis.* Two religions might merge in such a way that they share common enemies and are thereby enabled to intensify their opposition to other religions. Partial interreligious ecumenism of this sort may have a retarding effect upon long-range multi-religious ecumenism. But once adherents of one religion begin to appreciate the values of another religion, there is a tendency for some of them to look to still other religions, either step-wise through all our stages or more directly and deliberately, especially when their own evolution is far along. When people become aware that all religions are world religions, i.e., desire what is best for all people in the world, then they tend to become more open to inquiry, dialogue, softening, modification and cooperation with many others. Religions whose presuppositions differ more widely, and, perhaps, whose spatial locations separate them more widely, may be more difficult to synthesize. Some abhor the idea of such completion. Yet, from the viewpoint of world peace, some way of reducing, if not eliminating, the kinds of differences between religions which produce conflicts will continue to be needed. In any case, such a completion of progressive synthesis is primarily a speculative ideal at this point.
  13. *World religion?* By "world religion" I here mean, not merely a doctrine which advocates that everybody believe it and profit by it, but a doctrine to which all those who regard themselves as religious do, in fact, assent—partially at least—and practice in some way, at least some of the time. Whether there will ever be such a world religion seems quite uncertain at this time. Some despise the idea as unworthy even as an ideal. I include it here as an ideal stage which may or may not be realized, but which does, as an ideal, serve as a logical, and psychological, terminus of the evolutionary series outlined here. It represents a kind of wishful thinking which not everybody shares. Yet, those idealizing world peace may feel fortified in their idealism if they feel

supported by an ideal of religion without religions.  
For religion unites, but religions divide.

The foregoing hypothesis has been stated succinctly and without illustration. Although, doubtless, each reader has recalled from his own experience examples of some of the stages, the following illustrations should serve as suggestive of kinds of developments which surely exist in abundance.

Neglecting "ignorance" and "curiosity" as too obvious, and "intolerance" as too well known (e.g., recall the Christian Crusades against the Moslems and the Muslim separation of Pakistan from India), we may observe that "accommodation" has characterized interreligious life in the United States under a constitution guaranteeing religious liberty as well as "separation of church and state." Numbers of Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems and Jains have established themselves in the predominantly Christian United States, as have multitudes of Jews. My own experience of such accommodation began at about the age of six when my parents lived for a while on Goodwin Avenue in Detroit, where one end of the block was closed by the high and forbidding wall of a Roman Catholic monastery and the other end swarmed with Kosher meat markets and delicatessens.

More interesting, these days, is the growing prevalence of "encounter" and "inquiry" experiences. Now is a time of "encounter" for more Christians in many places in the world, partly because the rise of nationalism among former colonies of the declining British Empire has forced termination of Christian missionary activity and partly because Christianity itself has come under increasing attack at home by scientific developments. One example must suffice: while studying Buddhism in the University of Rangoon in 1955-56, I joined a weekly study group sponsored by the interdenominational Burma Christian Council to hear lectures by a Burmese Christian, U Pe Maung, Emeritus Professor of Pali and Abhidhamma (Theravada Buddhism). Most participants were Western missionaries who had been in Burma for some years without ever seriously studying Buddhist teachings. Con-

verts had been few, and most were engaged in a holding operation. They were preparing to train Burmese, often children of parents absorbed into the Christian community by charitable or so-called "rice-Christian" methods, to take over the teaching and administrative posts since new laws barred further admission of foreign missionaries. But the prevailing spirit of inquiry in this group was not, "What can I learn from Buddhism which may be helpful to me religiously?" but, "What can I learn about Buddhism—either some common beliefs wherewith to promote sympathy and initiate dialogue or some weakness whereby to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity—so that I may discover some foothold for argumentation?"

American youth today express great curiosity about other religions; not only are college courses in comparative religions popular, but elementary and high school teachers increasingly assist their students in gaining insight into other religions. A willing Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim in Albuquerque could find invitations to tell about his religion in a different Sunday school class almost every Sunday in the year. More and more people are inquiring about how other religions serve the needs of their members. The Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions was established to invite prominent scholars representative of major religions to live together for a year so they could become acquainted with each other's virtues, reasons, and values, and perhaps gain some insights into how much people of such different religions can reconcile their doctrinal differences. Correspondence with my revered friend Masao Abe, of Kyoto, Professor of Philosophy at Nara College, who spent some time at the Harvard Center, revealed his interest in discovering whether the Christian idea that God created the world out of nothing could be related to the Sunyavada Buddhist doctrine of Sunyata, Voidness, which he translates as "Absolute Nothingness." My reply had to be that consistency would require that God, too, would have had to emerge out of such Absolute Nothingness, and this is something to which Christians could never agree. Whether or not Professor Abe's inquiries represent some transition beyond the "encounter" stage, those who sup-

port the Harvard Center are to be congratulated for their efforts in encouraging interreligious ecumenism (see "How Can Buddhism Become a Universal Religion," *The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. III, No. 1, June, 1970, pp. 147-149).

*Softening* is illustrated by left-wing Unitarianism which appropriates inspirational thoughts from all of the world's scriptures. Its open-minded methods have become so extensive that some claim that it is no longer properly called "Christian."

*Dialogue* occurs most often when lovers, planning marriage, earnestly inquire about each other's faiths, or when a person has become disillusioned about his own inherited doctrines and deliberately seeks to find a better alternative. One of the most famous examples of a persistent inquirer, who studied with a willingness to change his views, was Sri Ramakrishna, who successively became an active devotee of several religions, thereby proving to himself that all were suitable ways to the same goal.

*Modification* may be illustrated (1) by Shin Buddhists in America adopting Christian methods such as organizing a Young Men's Buddhist Association and singing "Be Like Buddha, this my song," to Christian tunes, (2) by the Roman Catholic priest J.M. DeChanet, who, in his volume, *Christian Yoga* (Harpers, N.Y., 1960, tr. from French), explains how he adopted yogic postures and breathing exercises as means for improving his Christian prayers, and (3) by Sufis, Muslims whose mystical doctrines and practices seem at times indistinguishable from those of Hindu yogis.

*Cooperation*, exemplified by the efforts of the National Council of Christians and Jews, is well known. But I was pleasantly startled to discover that the "Gita Celebration," to which I was invited as a speaker, when I was in Benares in 1962-63 translating the *Bhagavad Gita*, was arranged in the Theosophical Society compound under the leadership of a Muslim.

*Partial emergence* is illustrated by "the three truths of China," where Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism often cooperate in serving different interests of the same family, and by Japanese acceptance of Confucian and

Buddhist ideals and practices as supplementary to those of the native Shinto religion.

*Progressive synthesis* may be illustrated (1) in the life of Raymond Pannikar, a Benares Hindu University professor, one of whose parents was a Catholic and one a Buddhist, who embodies both religions in his life, functioning at times as a Catholic priest, (2) in one group which has organized the Christian Yoga Church in California, and (3) in a new religion, Sikhism, resulting from emergence of Hindu and Muslim doctrines.

*World religion*, still a dream at present, is a "stage" only in the sense that it is something pointed to, hoped for, and idealized. Many have had their hopes aroused that "world religion" is in sight. Each major religion claims to aim at the good for all mankind, yet each still clings to some tenet which makes it unacceptable universally. One can be inspired by the common cry in India that "all religions are one," until he realizes that Vedanta is that one. Many, on first hearing about Bahai, say, as I did, "This is what I have been looking for," until they are called upon to revere its founders and to take sides on whether leadership succession is to be hereditary or elective. With the growth of science and rigorous scholarship, one now tends to look to experts for promise. An outstanding example is to be found in two works by P.T. Raju, *The Concept of Man* and *An Introduction to Comparative Philosophy*. After making detailed surveys of different cultural ideals, he summarizes what they all have in common. His conclusion: "Man." His answer is sound enough, but is also evidence that most of the work needed for effective ecumenism remains to be done.

Recently I joined the new Society for Oriental and Comparative Philosophy, but was disappointed when its March, 1969, meeting in Boston devoted its main panel to a merely linguistic problem: "Referring expressions." The quintennial East-West Philosophers' Conferences point in the right direction, but, like the World Parliament of Religions, have spent more time expounding different viewpoints than in seeking mutual understanding and in promoting common interests. The new Director of the fifth such conference, meeting during the summer of 1969,

appears to have abandoned even East-West topics in favor of the currently pressing problem of "Alienation." I joined the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, but found its properly open-minded policy resulting in interesting accumulations of data which appear more useful for anthropological surveyors than for studies of the nature of religion which will yield insights about what is common to all religions and may then be drawn upon as bases for formulating a more general religious perspective in which all peoples can genuinely share. As a final "stage" *world religion* is still an ideal, but it remains an enduring ideal.

Doubtless several precautions about this hypothesis should be noted:

1. Although it has been long in developing, it can profit from further study. I may have omitted stages. I have not yet re-examined all of the religions in their various relations with others to see how adequate it is.
2. The order of the stages may be only normal rather than universal, for in some situations dialogue may begin before softening, and cooperation before modification. Furthermore, since different people in the same religion develop at different rates, many stages may all be exhibited in a single religion in the lives of different members.
3. The suggested evolution may proceed so gradually that any sharp differentiation of stages falsifies the picture. Even if one accepts all of the stages proposed, at least some, if not all, may shade into each other by such minute degrees that the process should be described as a continuum rather than in terms of remarkable stages.
4. Differentials in the rates of evolution in various religions may be such that some will be left behind increasingly, widening a gap that may never be closed. On the other hand, an evangelical ecumenical spirit in some religions may hasten the process so that other religions may be induced to skip several stages in order to bring peace and harmony more quickly.
5. My hypothesis may be too simple, for there may be many lines of progressive evolution rather than just

one, and regressive stages may turn out to be typical also. Nothing has been said about the interrelations of religious evolution with other kinds of evolution, such as economic, political, linguistic, scientific, or technological, which may be more influential than interreligious contacts in determining the actual course of events.

6. Some say that "secularism" is a common enemy of all religions, and that its development has become so powerful and rapid that most religions will succumb to it before they have developed through many stages.

Such a statement is more likely to be made by those whose conception of religion is such that it does not fuse with and serve well in everyday life. Living religions (by which I mean not those which are still merely alive but those which enter continually into the daily working lives of people to help them to be constantly enjoying the goal of life as they proceed along their way) do not need to fear extinction or even competition from "secularism." A religion which separates the religious from the secular is already partly dead, for wholesomeness rather than separation is both a primary aim and a primary function of religion. A religion which remembers only a sabbath day is already six-sevenths dead. A religion in which each member habitually "prays without ceasing," where the "prayed-for" enjoyment of life is habitually embodied unceasingly while one works, has been naturalized.

Knowledge explosion has been engulfing all aspects of life, and religions which ignore or hide from the new revelations may find themselves swept aside and left behind with less and less to offer their members. Some of them, refusing to incorporate new truths as they are discovered, become enemies of truth, and, thereby, tend to become anti-religious in spite of their good intentions. They have become divisive rather than unitive. Hence, science, "secularism," and the unadaptability of some religions may bring the mass of mankind to a newer, somewhat different, and more wholesome outlook, possibly a new world-religion outlook, in a way which by-passes some of the religions.

IV  
BUDDHIST HUMANISM  
AS A MEANS TO RELIGIOUS HARMONY  
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Humanism is generally considered a Chinese phenomenon, especially Confucian. As a philosophy and literary movement in the West, it is supposed to have originated in Italy during the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This paper is intended to show that a very enlightened form of humanism came to be propagated in India by the Buddha, who was a contemporary of Confucius (sixth century, B.C.). Unfortunately, that humanistic aspect of Buddhism has rarely been emphasized by scholars who wrote on Buddhism during the last two centuries.

One of the earliest among Indian thinkers in his search for a solution to the problem of the origin and development of the universe, directed his attention to the notion of human desire (*kama*) as the connecting link between nonexistence (*asat*) and existence (*sat*), thereby emphasizing the primacy of human nature.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, it did not take much time for those who followed him to adopt the principle of "great extension" (similar to what one finds in Schopenhauer), in order to reach the conclusion that the reality of the universe, including man, is a cosmic "self" (Atman), spiritual in nature, yet transcending ordinary humanity.

Thus, in the Upanishads, the emphasis comes to be laid on a cosmic principle, the individual being a mere microcosmic element within it. Although, at first, attempts were made to see an identity between these two realities, these attempts did not succeed. Knowing oneself implied knowing oneself as *that (tat tvam)*. Knowing the nature of the cosmic self constituted the highest knowledge, the highest goal of human endeavor. It was the eternal, timeless, immutable and non-dual self. Such a transcendental self could not be easily reconciled with the notion of an impermanent, mutable and depraved individual person, as he is ordinarily understood. Hence, before long, the individual reality became a mere illusion (*maya*) and every form of individuality came to be sublimated by the notion of the transcendental self.

The failure on the part of the skeptical thinkers of the Materialist and Ajivika schools to know experientially such a transcendental self, not only led them to the other extreme of denying a cosmic spiritual reality, but also prompted them to accept a completely deterministic view of nature. Reality being what is sensorily given, human life, they believed, is completely determined by the laws of physical nature which they called *svabhava*. These were the "physicists" of the Indian tradition. For them physical nature constituted the reality. Psychic life, being a by-product of matter, is subordinate to physical nature. Therefore, they maintained that all beings, including humans, are propelled by the forces of physical nature and continue to wander in *samsara* with no self-power, no free-will, etc. They are thrown into one of the six types of existences (*abhijati*) by an inexorable unknown power and thence forward evolve according to the nature of that existence.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, discourse on ethics and morality turns out to be nothing but idle talk. According to these thinkers, humanism has no place in the scheme of things.

The attempt to reconcile these two opposing traditions led the Jaina thinkers, in a rather curious way, to recognizing an extreme form of moral determinism. They believed that human life is partly determined and partly undetermined. It is partly determined because of the possi-

bility of discovering the causes that determine it. It is partly undetermined because, sometimes, the causes are not discovered (*adrsta*). Among the causes that are known (*drsta*), human exertion (*purusakara*) constitutes an effective one. This recognition would make the Jainas humanists. But at the same time they insisted that among the known cause, there are some that are destined to occur (*niyata*) and which cannot be avoided. These are the effects of one's past actions (*karma*). Thus, for them, karma itself becomes an inexorable law, similar to the *svabhava* of the Materialists and Ajivikas. This explains their extreme asceticism which is intended as a sort of atonement for one's past karma.

To sum up the background, first there was the transcendentalism of the Upanishads which, in spite of its promise of freedom for man, was not easily accessible to him, except for the few initiated disciples. Secondly, the strict determinism of the Materialists and Ajivikas made it impossible for man to achieve any freedom on his own initiative. And thirdly, the moral determinism of the Jainas rendered man a slave of his own actions from which he could free himself only through excessive self-mortification. This represents the background in which Buddhism arose. The humanism of Buddhism is best understood in the light of this background.

The Buddha had an initial training in these disciplines, and being dissatisfied with them, he went on his own way to realize freedom from unhappiness and suffering in the world. It was only after he had decided, with great reluctance, to explain that freedom that the so-called philosophical problems arose. His problem was how best to explain the nature and status of man in the face of prevailing theories of transcendence and strict determinism. Like the Materialist, he discounted the existence of a transcendental self (Atman). But unlike the Materialists, he admitted that man occupies a very significant, but limited, place in the affairs of the world. His famous doctrine of "dependent arising" or causation (*paticcasamuppada*) was intended to explain the nature and status of man, without committing himself to any one of the extreme theories.

The Buddha did not recognize any transcendental

knowledge to the activities of the five senses only. Like some of his predecessors in the yogic tradition, he recognized the ability of man to develop his powers of perception that would enable him to see certain phenomena that normally escape the attention of a person with an unconcentrated mind. Yet he did not exaggerate their value; nor did he claim that they reveal a transcendental reality.<sup>5</sup> Higher faculties such as telepathy, Retrocognition and clairvoyance merely provided information regarding life and death than are yielded by ordinary man's sense experience. For example, retrocognition enables one to remember the various conditions under which one has been living in one's past lives, especially the causes that led to one's continued rebirth. Clairvoyance helps one to understand how other beings, when they have passed away at death, are reborn in various states of existence, once again determined by different causes and conditions. These higher knowledges did not constitute final knowledge, for they are not only limited in scope, but also could lead to error, as in the case of some who believed that they are able to perceive a permanent and immutable self by such means.<sup>6</sup> Final or veridical knowledge, for the Buddha, was the result of the cessation of defilements (*asavakkhaya*), better known as *panna* (Sk. *prajna*). The elimination of defiling tendencies such as likes and dislikes enables one to see things in their best perspective without any limitation imposed by one's disposition. The correct knowledge of phenomena or the best knowledge by experience is possible only after the elimination of the defilements. It is a result of this knowledge that the Buddha, as he claimed, was able to verify the fact of causation.<sup>7</sup> When likes and dislikes are eliminated, things are not seen in terms of self or other. For the Buddha, the theories of self-causation or external causation are not only metaphysical, but also products of prejudice.<sup>8</sup> The Buddha maintained that when things are seen from an unprejudiced point of view, they are perceived as arising depending upon (*paticca*) circumstances. This knowledge by experience is with regard to what is existentially given. It is called knowledge of phenomena or knowledge by experience (*dhamme nana*).<sup>9</sup> On the basis

of this knowledge by experience, it is possible to draw reasonable inferences regarding the past and the future. Such knowledge came to be called inductive knowledge (*anvaye nana*).<sup>10</sup>

From this it becomes clear that the Buddha recognized knowledge by experience and induction as being indispensable for man. While knowledge by experience gives man information regarding causal dependence (*paticcasamuppada*) of presently experienced phenomena (*dhamma*), inductive inference provides man with further *practical* knowledge with regard to the obvious past and the future, namely, that causation or dependence has a certain uniformity of occurrence (*dhammata*).<sup>11</sup>

With this knowledge of causation and causal uniformity, the Buddha proceeded to explain human life. Human life, according to him, is determined by a complex of causes or conditions. The combination of causes or conditions is important in that variations in the effect can only be accounted for by a variation of the complexity of conditions. Thus, examining the effect it is always possible to find causes that give rise to it. The notion of *necessity* is strengthened from this point of view. Examining a set of conditions with a view to determining the possible effect or effects, one can only hope for *sufficiency* and not necessity. This fact was very clearly recognized by the Buddha when he analyzed human life.

The Buddha maintained that the past human dispositions or volitional actions have played a major role in determining the present life. He saw death, not as the end of life, but as the beginning of a new one. This new beginning will occur only when the necessary conditions are obtained. Continuity of life after death is due to one's excessive grasping (*upadana*) for existence, coupled with other circumstantial conditions. Not only in the case of rebirth, but even with regard to life from birth to death, a complexity of conditions is operative. Human action or decision constitutes one important factor among this complexity of conditions. It is not the sole determinant.<sup>12</sup> This was the *Buddha's Theory of Karma*.

It is possible for man to change his future provided he is able to understand this complexity of conditions that

determines it. The Buddha admitted the difficulty of knowing beforehand with certainty this complexity of conditions. In such cases, he seems to claim, one can be guided by inductive inference regarding the uniformity of dependence (*dhammata*). Thus, as mentioned before, knowledge by experience and induction is essential and practically important for a man to achieve the *best* possible form of life.

But how is one to decide which is the best possible form of life? Knowledge by experience and induction alone is not sufficient for this. One needs a different kind of knowledge. Such a form of knowledge has to be evaluative rather than factual. This evaluative knowledge the Buddha called *anumana* or "measuring accordingly." "Measuring" (*mana*) is done "according to" (*anu*) knowledge by experience and induction, and not independent of it. *Anumana* is, therefore, knowledge by reflection and reasoning according to or based upon knowledge by experience and induction. Reflection will not be valid unless it is guided by the information yielded by experience and induction, i.e., the knowledge of causal dependence. This is the same as "reasoning or reflection according to causal genesis" (*yoniso manasikara*).<sup>13</sup> Knowledge of good (*kusala*) and bad (*akusala*) can be had only by such reflection and reasoning according to experience. Buddha's "Discourse on Measuring in Accordance with" (*Anumana-sutta*)<sup>14</sup> is intended to elucidate this idea. Here he says:

Your reverences, a monk should evaluate himself by himself thus: 'That person who is of evil desires and who is in the thrall of evil desires, that person is displeasing and disagreeable to me; and, similarly, if I were of evil desires and in the thrall of evil desires, I would be displeasing and disagreeable to others.' When a monk, your reverences, knows this, he should make up his mind that: 'I will not be of evil desires nor in the thrall of evil desires.'<sup>15</sup>

Reflective knowledge is thus evaluative or normative. It provides information regarding what is good and bad, what is pleasant and unpleasant. It pertains to ultimate virtue or goodness. As is evident from the above passage,

this reflective knowledge is not only evaluative, but also directive. Evaluative knowledge would be useless unless it is followed by proper practice and action. The goal of learning by experience and reflection is to perfect one's personality, to be a perfect man (*uttamapurisa*).

On the basis of the above-mentioned knowledge of facts and values, the Buddha came to the conclusion that human suffering in this world is due to excessive desire or attachment (*raga*), aversion (*dosa*) and confusion (*moha*).<sup>16</sup> A greedy and confused man not only harms others, but also harms himself. Using this criterion it is possible to find four types of persons in the world.

1. One who harms oneself (*attantapo*).
2. One who harms others (*parantapo*).
3. One who harms both oneself and others (*attantapo ca parantapo ca*), and
4. One who harms neither oneself nor others (*neva attantapo na parantapo ca*).<sup>17</sup>

The "superman" according to Buddhism is one who harms neither oneself nor others. He is the "awakened one" (*buddha*) or the "worthy one" (*arhat*) who is endowed with both knowledge and conduct (*vijjacaranasampanno*). Such a person has crossed over all doubt (*tinnavicikiccho*), which means that he is able to act with a clear goal in view, and does not waver (*akathamkathi*) when faced with obstacles. He is one who has attained freedom (*vimutti*) from the suffering and unhappiness in the world. Living according to the factual and normative knowledge, the enlightened man remains unsmudged by the suffering and happiness in the world. He is like a lotus (*pundarika*) that grows in the muddy water, but remains unsmudged by it.<sup>18</sup> Such a person, it may be maintained, is not only happy by himself, but also makes other people happy by being pleasant and helpful to them.

While the elimination of the three roots of evil mentioned above enables one to lead a happy and purposeful life here and now (*ditthe'vadhamme*), it also enables one to put an end to continuous rebirth, for one of the important conditions that contributes to the cycles of births and deaths

according to the Buddha, is excessive desire for existence (*bhava-tanha*). With no such desire for existence, the enlightened one faces death without worry or trepidation.

The goal of Buddhism is thus not the attainment of a transcendental or immortal state after death. Immortality (*amata*) is merely the absence of rebirth (*apunabbhava*), not the avoidance of death in this present life. Such is the freedom attained by a person who understands the nature of life on the basis of the knowledges discussed above. This is a very naturalistic view of life, where man is not subordinated to a supernatural power or principle. It recognizes the ability on the part of man to attain freedom and happiness through an understanding of the nature of human life.<sup>19</sup>

The philosophy of early Buddhism, as outlined above, undoubtedly represents one of the most comprehensive and systematic forms of humanism. It is based on naturalistic metaphysics, with "causal dependence" (*paticcasamuppada*) as its central theme. Avoiding any form of transcendentalism, determinism, or fatalism, it emphasizes its ultimate faith in man and recognizes his power potentiality in solving his problems through reliance primarily upon empirical knowledge, reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision. It believes in the freedom of man, not in a transcendental sphere, but here and now. The highest goal it offers is not other-worldly but this-worldly. The only point on which early Buddhism would differ from modern theories of humanism<sup>20</sup> seems to be on the question of life after death, a fact recognized in early Buddhism in such a way that it does not interfere with its humanistic approach.

How can a philosophical tradition that recognizes no transcendence, either of God or ultimate reality, contribute to religious harmony when most of the major religions in the world do recognize such transcendence? Out of the major religious traditions in the world, Buddhism has enjoyed the reputation of being the most nonviolent and tolerant. It was able to co-exist with many leading philosophical and religious traditions. In the Far East, it survived for centuries in the midst of Confucianism, Taoism

and Shintoism without having to compromise its basic teachings for the sake of such survival. In modern times, it has enjoyed peaceful co-existence even with theistic systems such as Christianity and Islam when it came into contact with them. The disappearance of Buddhism in India is generally attributed to the destructive force of the Muslim invasions. However, it is important to keep in mind that by the time of the Muslim invasions of India, Buddhism had already disappeared from its soil. What was left to be destroyed was only a handful of Buddhist monks and monasteries.

Ironically, the only major religious tradition in the presence of which Buddhism could not survive for length of time seems to be Hinduism. A very careful examination of the reason for this failure may provide an interesting insight for those who are looking for ways and means of bringing about mutual understanding and harmony among the adherents of the divergent religious traditions in the modern world.

Hinduism, Christianity and Islam are all theistic religions. All of them recognize the belief in a Supreme Deity who is also the creator of the universe, even though the form in which that deity is conceived of may be different. Buddhism rarely had difficulty in dealing with such a conception. The Buddha's attitude toward conceptions such as God or ultimate reality was such that he was able to avoid any direct conflict with anyone who believed in such concepts. Whenever someone claimed that there exists a permanent and eternal self or soul or ultimate reality that goes beyond ordinary sense experience or even the extraordinary powers of experience, the Buddha remained silent, without either asserting its existence or denying it. Therefore, there was no reason for him to come into conflict with anyone who asserted such a conception. The same is true with regard to his attitude relating to the conception of God. The only occasion he denounced such a conception of ultimate reality or God is when that interfered with or contradicted individual initiative. So long as the individual initiative and the ability on the part of man to make himself happy or unhappy is not denied, the Buddha was

willing to keep quiet. This was not the case with Hinduism. The Hindu religion not only recognized the existence of a Supreme Deity who created the world, but also insisted that the four-fold social order consisting of priests (brahmana), rulers or warriors (ksatriya), citizens (vaisya) and servants (sudra) were also created by him and therefore the preservation of that world order (dharma) was an inalienable duty of each and everyone (svadharma). The economic, social, political, moral as well as spiritual life of man was thus completely determined by the divinely ordained caste-system. This was an idea that came into direct conflict with Buddha's philosophy of humanism. Therefore, he condemned it outright. The result was that during his day and for a few centuries after his demise, the down-trodden classes as well as the more enlightened ones from among the so-called higher classes embraced Buddhism and enjoyed a sense of freedom without any economic, social or political constraint. However, it did not take long for Hinduism to revive its philosophy based on the caste-system and present it to the people in a more attractive and subtle form and this is the function of the famous Hindu classic, the *Bhagavad-Gita*. With that, Buddhism disappeared as a major religious tradition from the Indian soil and thrived in contexts where no such absolute social systems existed. However, scattered groups of Buddhist monks and scholars continued to survive in the various centers connected with the life of the Buddha or his disciples.

This means that Buddhism could cooperate and coexist in harmony with any religious tradition that recognizes the value of human life and equality among human beings. It could not survive in the face of traditions that discriminated among human beings on the basis of color or caste. The recognition of the value of human life and equality among human beings, in other words, the recognition of humanism, therefore, seems to be a pre-condition for bringing about harmony among the various religious traditions, even though they may be divided on the basis of the metaphysical ideas they uphold.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, New York & London: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1972, vol. 4. p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>*Rgvedax*. 129. See especially "A Re-examination of *Rgveda* x. 129. The Nasadiya Hymn," by Walter H. Maurer, *The Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Washington, D.C. 3 (1975): 217-238.

<sup>3</sup>For a detailed study of the Materialist and Ajivika theories of nature (*svabhava*), see my *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1975, pp. 24-41.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 44-50

<sup>5</sup>*Digha-nikaya*, ed. T.W. Rhys Davids and J.E. Carpenter: London: Pali Text Society, 1967, i. 14 ff.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, i. 83-84.

<sup>8</sup>*Samyutta-nikaya*, ed. M. Leon Feer, London: PTS, 1960, i. 17-21.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.* i. 58.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>See *ibid.* i. 25-27.

<sup>12</sup>For a detailed analysis, see my *Causality*, pp. 115-132.

<sup>13</sup>*Digha-nikaya*, iii. 227.

<sup>14</sup>*Majjhima-nikaya*, ed. V. Trenckner and R. Chalmers, London: PTS, 1887, i.95 ff.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.* i. 97.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid. i. 47, 489.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. i. 414 ff.

<sup>18</sup>*Anguttara-nikaya*, ed. R. Morris, London: PTS, 1955, ii. 37-39.

<sup>19</sup>For a detailed discussion of Nibbana in early Buddhism, see my *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1976, pp. 69-88.

<sup>20</sup>See Lamont, Corliss, *The Philosophy of Humanism* (Revised), New York: Fredrick Ungar Publishing Co., 1974, p. 12 ff.

V  
**THE RELIGIONS OF AFRICA**  
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Africans are very religious people. Neither the early explorers and merchants nor even the early missionaries realized this. They were all too much wrapped up in their own thinking, and following their own purposes, to notice other people's feelings. They described Africans as savages, barbarians and heathen idolaters. Yet it is true, as Willoughby pointed out in 1928, that in Africa "life is essentially religious. The relation of the individual to the family, the clan and the tribe—politics, ethics, law, war, status, social amenities, festivals,—all that is good and much that is God...is grounded in religion. Religion pervades the life of the people." Since those days many things have changed in many parts of Africa, as a result of Eastern and Western influence, and much, probably most, of the old African religions has been lost. My purpose here is not to follow this process of Islamization, Christianization, industrialization, secularization etc., but to try and trace the original forms of some of the autochthonous religions of Africa. This is possible only in a few cases, for many religions are lost even to the memory of the people as a result of displacement by conversion of their adherents, dislocation of the societies, and destruction of their holy places. At one time there may have been as many as a

thousand different religions in Africa, many of which have now been replaced by Islam, Christianity, socialism, or communism. The figure—which is purely an estimation—is based on the fact that there are over a thousand distinct languages (not counting dialects) in Africa, and as many tribes. The term 'tribe' is here used without, of course, any prejudicial notions, to indicate an ethnic group, i.e. a group of people, tied together by (often unproven) ties of kinship, preferably a common ancestor, who worship the same god or gods, speak the same language and share a common culture, way of life and social organization. A tribe may number between a few dozen (i.e. an extended family or clan) and in some cases a million or more. In these latter cases we ought to speak of small nations, such as the Zulu who with 4 million are more numerous than the Welsh (2.8 million of whom almost 800,000 speak Welsh). In the Roman Empire the term, *nation* or nation indicated a people who worshipped their own gods, which shows that for the Romans there were two major criteria for assigning a person to a 'nation': birth and religion. These two concepts formed were the definition of the concept *nation* which means 'birth'. Compare this concept to the modern European redesignation of national boundaries on the basis of language: Slovenes, Hungarians and Rumanians have been defined by their language.

In Africa however, and also amongst Asian peoples, religion defines a nation: e.g. Pakistan and Bangla Desh were carved out of British India along the frontiers of Islam. In Egypt the Copts, the only survivors of the ancient Egyptians, are defined by their Christianity. In prehistorical times, we find the entire inhabited world occupied by tribes. In many parts of Africa that situation is still prevalent except where tribes have been forcibly moved from their traditional habitat to locations prepared by the government as happened in the Belgian Congo and still happens in Tanzania. Apart from common gods and common ancestors, a tribe was defined by a common territory (as a nation is today) which was more or less agreed by other tribes and was jealously guarded against intruders, by what we now call the territorial imperative. Nomadising

tribes also had, and still have, their territory where they can graze their animals and make use of the wells, usually excluding other tribes from that use. Land traditionally owned by a certain tribe will be sacred to it, because the ancestors lie buried in it, and the gods have their shrines and other holy places there, such as wells, (as in Delphi), mountains (Mount Kilimanjaro is the home of a god), rivers (the Nile was a god for the ancient Egyptians), forests (as in Yorubaland) and of course, the sea. Tradition grows where peace reigns. Wars will invariably disrupt existing traditions, while not allowing any institutions to become traditions. Similarly, floods and diseases, pests, drought and famine, will break the fragile network of traditions and cause people to revert to their animal habits. Indeed, all the tribes of man know that tradition is what distinguishes us from the animals, because animals neither speak nor sing, nor worship God, neither can they refrain from food or sex when the urge and opportunity are there. Of all these tradition—sanctified human activities, it is universally agreed that worshipful service of the spiritual powers is the most sublime. Religion is the supreme expression of the human mind.

At one time then, every African people had a religion, all men believed in a spiritual reality. A brief discussion of the concept "religion" is here necessary, because African religions are so completely different from the great world religions. The word 'religion' is usually associated with the word *religere* meaning 'to make a connection, tie, bind, i.e. especially to create ties of mutual obligation'; in other words to make a covenant. In both the Roman and Hebrew religions we read about the vows people made to the deity, thereby creating obligations. The fulfillment of these they hoped would move the deity to reward them with progeny, prosperity, long life, and the prevention or removal of evil such as a disease. In many African religions, the obligations are created by the tradition of ritual, so that if certain ceremonies are neglected, the deities will strike mankind with disease or disaster. Further rituals are then necessary to remove evil and restore the good order. We must therefore widen our concept of religion to include

all forms of contact, good or evil, between man and the invisible forces of what we will call the spiritual world. These forces are usually superior, i.e. more powerful than people, but some persons in many cases after special training, are believed to possess specific powers that enable them to cope with those invisible forces; such persons are called priests, prophets, witch doctors, sorcerers, magicians, media, faith healers, exorcists, diviners, dream interpreters and shamans.

Secondly, we have to define our method. I will endeavor to approach the religion of a given people from the inside. Most anthropologists study behavior and so they approach the people they work amongst from the outside. The special method for the study of religion called phenomenology tries to reconstruct the world as it appears when seen with the eye of the believer, it tries to recreate the sky with its gods and the world under the earth with its ghosts, the desert with its demons, the sea with its monsters. Only when seen from this central point of view will the cosmology of the religion one studies, make sense. It will be clear now that we need to introduce a positive concept to replace the negative terms that are customary for the description of these phenomena such as unseen, invisible, metaphysical, supernatural, all of which mean simply 'outside our (Western) horizon of perception.' I shall use the word spirit.

It will soon become clear that the single concept "spirit" helps to explain a very complex system of beliefs that exists among any group of people in Africa. The term spirit as used here will mean nothing more than: the unseen power that causes inexplicable events. There are many many such events in the lives of Africans. A man will hurt his foot, caught under a root on his path. Who has placed this root there on his usual way to his field from his house? Surely only his enemy can have put it there in the middle of the night. But how, since no one saw him or heard him? He must have done it by magical means. He probably took a piece of wood, put a spell on it and sent it off. It flew by itself from his house to the path of the innocent victim, where it caught the latter's foot. The wood has a spirit in it, and that spirit obeys the wicked sorcerer. "In it" is perhaps

not a correct way of representing the effect of the sorcerer's incantations, yet that is the way it is expressed in African languages. We should take the word 'spirit' in the meaning of 'energy' rather than in the meaning of 'invisible but consciously thinking being.' It is precisely that ancient concept of animation which fits so well with what Africans have told me, and other anthropologists, concerning what is often called animism. Though much abused, this term will have to serve as the name of the cosmology that prevails in most of Sub-Saharan Africa. "The belief that all things have a soul," is one of the best known definitions of animism, but a misleading definition. It implies firstly, by using the word belief, that animism is a sort of superstition, whereas I would rather describe it as a philosophy (following Temples). Secondly, 'soul' implies something comparable to a human soul, i.e. a spiritual being, individual and unique, possessing memory and the capacity to feel pity or repentance, as well as responsibility. The spirit that "lives in" all things in Africa is less anthropomorphic. It is in its simplest form just a nucleus of energy, a spark of lingering life. A tree that sprouts fresh leaves after a long drought is said to still have "the old spirit," in the sense of "the will to live."

It is precisely this primeval "will to live" which, in Africa, is the basis of all philosophy. On it are founded the distinction between good and evil, the actions of the ancestors and many other essential principles of African philosophy, which will be discussed presently. Animism is simply the "will to live," which Africans observe in many phenomena, and not only those which we call "living beings" such as plants and animals. The sun and the moon can be seen to return to life, when they rise after an absence of a night or a few days. Rivers have their periods of being 'low', when the water does not flow cheerfully but stagnates in muddy pools or disappears altogether. After such a period of 'being dead', the river may come back, and with it, the plants will come back to life, and the frogs and fishes will reappear out of nowhere. The frogs are considered in certain parts of Africa to possess the mysterious power of revival for after the first rains their croaking

announces the magic touch of water that brings nature back to life. The rock from which the well springs which gives fresh water even in the times of drought must possess a powerful magic which provides life for all who drink from it. The ancient Greeks, Egyptians and Romans also regarded wells and rivers as living, even divine, beings, to whom offerings were brought. This is a conception that we find in many parts of Africa, (and at least vestigially everywhere else). The earth herself, as well as the ever-moving ocean, are obviously alive, if one accepts this philosophy of life. However, there is more: the drum which functions prominently in all African communities, has a voice and a personality all its own. The king's drums may only be struck at the king's command, and never after his death. A boat too, is a person, on whom the fishermen depend for safety and good luck. Manufacturing boats and drums is an art, associated with religious observances in many parts of Africa. Weapons may have names, like Arthur's sword, like boats, rivers and mountains. In its most primitive form, 'spirit' is 'only' energy. Then life itself, the will to live, and in the more advanced forms of existence, will, becomes personality, i.e. *anima*, identity.

The belief in a god is dependent on the belief in the human soul. One may believe in one's immortal soul without in addition believing that there is a god or even a pantheon of gods. But without the acceptance that a man is more than just matter and that part of him will survive this life, the belief in other, extra-human, spiritual beings, makes no sense and does indeed not occur to my knowledge. Let us look at the ideas of the Bantu, the survival of a person after his death is not in doubt. They believe that they will one day see again those that have gone before, and even think of sending them greetings. The belief that the dead may one day rise again is responsible for the well-known burial posture of a dead person with his or her knees up against his chin. The reason for this is not—as the psycho-analysts have argued—the symbolization of an embryonic state, but an attitude from which it is easier to rise up and walk away. It seems to be universally believed that, during his sleep, a man's soul may wander away from his body to see

distant places and hear voices from the other world, meet persons who have died, visit the land of the ghosts, and even to take on the appearance of an animal (a hyena), a bird (a owl) or an insect (a butterfly) to travel in. The same or similar beliefs are reported from Indonesia and Central Asia. The ancient Greeks too, believed that what we call a dream is 'in reality' the soul travelling. Many Africans sleep very deeply 'like logs' and are not easily aroused. Perhaps they dream more than northerners? Perhaps that is the soul wandering around? It does seem that they travel about a great deal at night. During his life a man with a strong spirit may change his appearance and become an animal, not just in his dream but in his waking life. A woman (among the Tsonga and Shona) may turn herself into a hyena when she wishes to go out at night with her coven. After death a man's soul may become an ancestor. Some people remember the names of a dozen ancestors, but it is doubtful whether they believe in immortality *for eternity*.

There has been some debate regarding the question of polypsychism, i.e. whether there are African peoples who believe in more than one soul, but this is not a fruitful discussion since in most cases it is even hard to distinguish between 'spirit' as the basic energy that keeps the body alive and healthy, and the 'soul,' the personal conscious carrier of thoughts and feelings that can travel, perceive and remember.

Sometimes a word for 'soul' in one language occurs in other, related languages with the meaning 'heart,' 'life,' 'breath,' 'dream' or even 'shadow.' There is usually a separate word for 'discarnate soul' in most Bantu languages, *Zimu* or *Modimo*, but sometimes that may also mean 'spirit' (a being that never was human) or 'ghost' (an unfriendly soul). Among the Yao, infants who have not yet been formally introduced to the world are not believed to have developed a soul yet, so their death is not considered of much consequence. In Ghana some people believe that there are wandering souls who will be born as human babies but soon abandon the bodies so that a period of high infant mortality is regarded as a sign of the arrival of a swarm of these wandering spirits. Among the Basuto,

when a new-born child dies, it is believed that the spirits of the mother's ancestors have taken it, so she has to be purified by the sacrifice of a black sheep.

Widespread is the belief that the soul exists before, as well as after death, and that the soul of a grandfather or father may after he has died, come back to the body of a son. The cycle of myths of the Nkundo people are entirely based on this conception.

The soul looks like the body. For instance when a person (i.e. his soul) appears to a dreamer, he will look like his physical appearance, wearing the same clothes, speaking with the same voice and with the same scars on his skin. Only, a person's soul-double is smaller, more like a dwarf. There are many stories about these elusive 'little people' whose behavior is reminiscent of leprechauns, e.g., the famous Ucakijana in Zulu fairy tales.

Some Bantu believe that the soul of the dead look like birds, as did the ancient Egyptians; the Herero say that a dead man will rise from his grave looking like a little dog, but with eyes in the back of his head. Animals too, have souls. For instance: from West Africa the Rev. Nassan reports that in the Ogowe, a hunter who had killed a female hippopotamus, kneeled inside its carcass and prayed there to her soul or life-spirit, asking her forgiveness for having cut her off from maternity and not to upset his canoe when he would be fishing in the river, in revenge for her death. Spirits of lions, leopards and buffaloes are said to have haunted the hills of Kenya and Uganda, some people having reported they had heard their cattle lowing who had all died of rinderpest. In East Zambia it was said that the lions too, worshipped their ancestral spirits under a *musoro* tree by offering them the best parts of their quarries.

Certain Bantu sorcerers are believed to possess the power to call a dead man out of his grave by means of spells and incantations. This can only be done though within a short time after the man's death, before the body has decayed. The body of a deceased chief was 'mummified' in Central Africa, in order to prevent decay; the Shona used to dry it by smoking it over a fire after hanging it between two rocks; the Bemba rub it with boiled maize;

the Kaonde apply porridge made from red millet. From along the Congo in Zaire and on the Aruwimi too, we have reports of the smoking of a dead chief, and the same ceremonies have been described in Angola where the dead chief is placed in a pit in the floor of his own house, after which three fires are lit on cowskins placed over his body. Interment may take place a long time later. If on the other hand, there is reason to suspect that the dead man (or woman, if she was a witch) may come back to haunt those who have done him wrong, his body will be destroyed, usually by burning, or by throwing it in the bush for the vultures, or by cutting it up into pieces and scattering them, preferably after burning, while spells are chanted.

Burning the body after execution was also the punishment for witchcraft in Central Zambia and Katanga. When a man had threatened that he would haunt his survivors as a leopard or a lion, his body would be dug up and burnt, as was the lion's carcass. Melland reported from Zambia in 1911 that the people believed some men and women rose from their graves at night to suck the blood of the living. A diviner would be engaged who could identify the grave, whereupon it would be opened and the bones destroyed. If in West Africa at least three of the children of the same mother are born and die in quick succession, it is believed they are 'wanderer souls' and their bodies are destroyed before burial.

Chiefs received a special treatment but commoners were—in the days long before the colonial period—simply left in the bush and the children were told, "Grannie has gone on a journey with Mr. Hyena". (reported by Willoughby 1882, p.27). In some places, for a man who had, before dying, expressed the intention of coming back as a ghost, he was buried in a very deep pit. This may be the origin of the custom of interment. If a man dies far from home, for instance on a hunting expedition, and the corpse is never found, his relatives will slaughter an ox and bury its bones wrapped in the skin together with his possessions, for there is room for fear that he might cause sickness in the village. In most parts of Africa there lingers a belief in the continued presence of the soul near the tomb. The graves

are covered with flat stones on which sacrifices may be performed; and these may be the oldest altars. According to A. Cardinall, when the tribe moves to another locality, they take some sand from the graves, presumably taking the souls of the dead with them in the sand. Sand from the tombs of saints is worn as an amulet, sewn in a little bag in North Africa, to protect its owner by means of the saint's spirit. The custom of leaving an opening in the grave through which wine can be poured directly into the dead man's mouth is reported from among the Bateke in Zaire as well as from the Mediterranean countries in antiquity. This proves that many primitive peoples already believed that the soul remained close to the body even in the grave and this is still believed by Muslims. In Nigeria it is believed that especially the skull remains the seat of the soul. In many parts of Africa the dead haunt the place where they died or lie buried until the moment that all the proper funerary ceremonies have been completed. In Zimbabwe and Lesotho when a man has died, the completion of the funerary rites are at the same time a request to his soul to take its place among the spirits of the ancestors. Meat and beer is offered as an offering to the deceased who is now a god. The Zulu used to institute a special ceremony called *ukubyisa* 'to bring back,' hoping to induce the spirit of a venerated chief or a helpful and dependable father to take up his residence in his own village again, about a year after his death. A goat is killed and its stomach is burned. A similar ceremony is reported from the Mashona and the Vandau further east. Most peoples of Equatorial and southern Africa believe that the soul lingers near its body's grave, and that souls of strong characters will continue to have influence on the lives of their descendants, for which reason good relations must be maintained. In Botswana, a dead man is given an ox's rope and milking utensils, a dead woman a pestle, a winnow, a spoon and a plate before burial. In northwest Zambia an eye-witness of a funeral was struck by the fact that all the relatives acted in a way to show they knew the deceased was alive and present. The Wachagga of northwest Tanganyika would wrap the body of a man in a freshly slaughtered bull's

hide and bury him under the floor of his senior wife's cabin. In the banana orchard the following prayer would be recited to the clan's founder: "Great grandfather, our father who guards this village, receive this bull, may you eat it with your fathers. Take this son of your son's son, open for him the door of the village of the ancestors and protect him for ever after. He was taken from our hands." This last sentence implies that the ancestors did not prevent the man's death, so now they are asked to protect him in the next life.

VI  
GOD IN VISUAL AESTHETIC EXPRESSION  
—A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN  
TRANSCENDENCE SYMBOLIZATION

by Lois Ibsen al Faruqi

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Humans, regardless of race, geographic and climatic environment, or source of economic wealth, have been fascinated by the questions dealing with their existence and its purpose in the on-going stream of life in the universe. Every people, in striving to understand the human situation and how it arose, have sought an explanation for human life. They have attempted to determine an overall structure and direction for life's processes and an understanding of its determining force or forces. They have asked such questions as: Is there an Ultimate Reality which created man and nature? If so, what is the nature of that Ultimate Reality or God? What is the divine plan or will for creation?<sup>1</sup>

There are many ways in which a culture may set down or transmit its religious message. It may do so conceptually through its religious and philosophical treatises, and even through its oral or written literature—its myths, drama, poetry and prose. It may also transmit its religious message cultically, i.e., through its religious rites and practices. The transmission may also be societal, i.e.,

through the creation of customs and institutions governing the political, social and economic lives of the people. A fourth way of translating a culture's god-view is through an aesthetic dimension, i.e., by the art works its people produce. It is to that aesthetic translation of the message that we direct ourselves in this paper.

Every culture's description of the Transcendent or God is special and unique, and it is matched to the space and time environment in which it grew. Ideas regarding the world and mankind, which derive as spin-offs from the central notion of Ultimate Reality, present additional facets of a particular and detailed notion of the culture's conception of reality. It is because of the uniqueness of the complex of these basic premises that all aspects of a civilization take on a special hue which is unique in relation to that of any other culture of people. Its religion, its philosophy; its political, social and economic institutions; its arts, and even its natural sciences and mathematical contributions are determined by that religious and ideational complex.<sup>2</sup>

In an artistic presentation of a religiously significant message, content is expressed through sensory means rather than through conceptual, cultic or social data. This artistic reinforcement of the message has come to be known as "symbolic expression," since it is a sensory representation of something not immediately evidenced to the senses. But this is not the only meaning of "symbolism." The term is also used in a much more limited and specific way, i.e., implying the utilization of a sensory image or figure to arouse in the mind of the spectator a remembrance or an intuition of another object, living creature, event or idea which is conventionally associated in the relevant culture with that particular image. Symbolism is, under this second definition, a substitution of an abbreviated statement or "clue" for the wider and deeper meaning behind the visual symbol. Thus the term carries both a general meaning which seems to include all art as in some way expressive of deep meanings, and a narrower meaning which designated it as only one aspect of the iconography of art, that pertaining to the identification of particular figures.

This double meaning of the term "symbolism" has caused a good deal of confusion and requires clarification. For this purpose, we will attempt to describe three levels of message carrying or symbolism which pertain to the arts in their role of expressing ideas about God or Ultimate Reality. One of the three levels of symbolic expression is that which is found in the subject matter or "surface content" of the work. This includes the particular person, object or scene portrayed which has significance in the traditions of the culture in question, e.g., the Nativity or Crucifixion scene in Christianity or the Enlightenment of the Buddha in Buddhist culture. This we shall call the *explicit content* of a work of art. Secondly, we would posit another content level, one which is synonymous with symbolism in the narrower sense. Included in this category are all those literal symbols or signs used in the art works of various cultures which are loaded with meanings for the initiated viewer—e.g., the stupa, the mandala, the cross, the menorah. This we shall call *symbolic content* since it fulfills the more conventional meaning of the term "symbolism." There is still another level of expression which lies behind the subject matter or *explicit content* and behind the literal symbolism or *symbolic content*. We will label this third category of expression *implicit content*. This level includes all those aesthetically significant means for combining the materials of the first and second levels. It involves features of both structure and style which help reveal in much more subtle ways the deep premises of world-view and god-view of the culture.

Our next task is to try to discover how these three levels or kinds of "symbolic" statement (here the term is used in its wider sense) apply by investigating how artists of specific belief systems have translated their ideologies into aesthetic products. Examples will be drawn from the art traditions of Hinduism and Islam. These are only two out of a great number of religious cultures which could be investigated for analogous materials, but they will clarify and test the hypothesis that art reveals various levels of content or symbolic statement.

## TRANSCENDENCE SYMBOLIZATION IN HINDU ART

### The God-View

Probably the leading motif of religious thought in Hindu culture is the idea that Ultimate Reality partakes of an inseparable unity with all existence. The Brahman Atman, as the Hindus refer to the Absolute, is the unknowable, indescribable, unlimited divine Power which pervades and is Cause of all creation and action, whether divine, demonic or human. This Absolute is above all gods, as well as above animate and inanimate creation; yet everything from top to bottom of the hierarchy of existence partakes of and is related integrally to this Brahman Atman or World Soul. Therefore every aspect of nature, beautiful or ugly, is a manifestation of the Absolute.

God, for the Hindu, encompasses all. He is considered to include both good and evil, to have both abstract and incarnate forms. Since life in this world is but an extension of the Absolute, existence also evidences a plethora of often conflicting characteristics, of dual tensions and forces: good and evil, light and darkness, night and day, male and female, pleasure and pain, birth and death, active and passive, subject and object, body and soul. The most crucial dichotomy is of course that of the transient created world of *maya* and the eternal spiritual world of the Brahman Atman.

There is also an individual soul or *atman* which longs for union with World Soul, from which it was created. It is only with the return to its Source that the individual soul can achieve release from the otherwise endless human miseries, deaths and rebirths. Only in this way can the individual overcome the *karma* ("action"), or earned destiny from previous lives, which holds it captive.

The escape from the power of *karma* and the endless rebirths through which the human soul, as well as all creation suffers, is known as *moksha* (lit., "set free"). According to the Hindus, it can be achieved through ritual observance, good works, right thinking and contemplation.<sup>3</sup> Members of the faith have regarded art as an important and legitimate aid for the right thinking and contemplation

that led to *moksha*. For the Hindu, therefore, art is not mere entertainment, but a way of helping him/her understand the nature of reality and of his true relationship to that reality.

### The Artistic Expression of the God-View

#### A. Explicit Content

Since the Hindus believe that Ultimate Reality imparts its essence into every, even the lowest strata and manifestations of existence, all earthly creatures and objects have been considered proper motifs or subject matter for the art of Hindu culture. Vegetation, animals, humans, demons, gods and goddesses have all been represented. Three categories of subject matter, however, are outstanding for their frequency and importance in Hindu aesthetic expression.

The first category includes all those supernatural beings which have played a role in the religious and cultural life of the Hindus. These include the three aspects of the Brahman Atman—that is, Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma, as well as a host of deities of popular Hinduism—e.g., Ganesha (the elephant god, son of Shiva), Kali (goddess of destruction, and consort of Shiva), and Krishna (the tenth *avatar* or incarnation of Vishnu), to name but a few. The supreme God of the Hindus, the Brahman Atman, is strictly speaking abstract and neuter; but it is believed that He can be conceived of in such form only by the spiritually gifted or those particularly capable of abstract thought. The masses, it has been felt, need more personal, recognizable deities with known forms and sentiments.<sup>4</sup> All supernatural beings are regarded as representations of incarnations (*avatars*) of the ultimate Deity of Hinduism. Practically every important aspect of the Supreme Being therefore has been personified and given a form from nature which the Hindu associates with it. And practically every phenomenon in nature has in a sense been apotheosized. There are three river goddesses for the major waterways of the Indian subcontinent. There are *yakshas*, genii representing the forces of the soil as well as jewels and precious metals. There are *nagas*, serpent kings and queens associated with the lakes, ponds, rivers

and oceans. The second category of *explicit content* in Hindu art comprises all those personages and events of the epic literature—particularly the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. These works were written and rewritten an unknown number of times between 500 B.C. and 200 A.D., and have been influential on religion and art since that time. These myths depicting the deeds of humans and gods are frequently drawn upon for religiously significant artistic subject matter.

A third type of *explicit content* is the *mithuna* or erotic art which is so prevalent in Hindu aesthetic production. This includes all those figures, usually as couples in human form, which represent the longing of the human soul for union with the World Soul. Sexual union between human or divine couples became the subject matter of a vast number of statues and reliefs in Hindu art.<sup>5</sup> Hindus regard the act of love as representing the combination of opposites in existence. Since it implies, as well, the mystical union with divinity, it has been regarded by the Hindus as a legitimate subject matter for religious art.

## B. Symbolic Content

Used in its limited or literal sense, symbolism is a particularly rich content level in Hindu culture. Figurations of earthly beings and objects used by the Hindu artists are exhaustive in their variety. These are never mere representation of particular creatures or objects. They are at the same time symbols of other entities farther up on the hierarchical scale of existence, or even of the abstract powers, emotions and ideas related to the underlying belief system. As must already be apparent, the gods and goddesses, the characters of the epic stories and the erotic figures are not only significant as subject matter for Hindu art (i.e., as *explicit content*); but they also play an important role as literal symbols of other ideas and/or figures rooted deeply in the culture and religious traditions (i.e., as examples of *symbolic content*). Other important examples of literal symbols expressive of Hinduism are described below.

## 1. Symbols Associated with the Representation of Gods and Goddesses

### a. ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURES

Each god or goddess has a particular and recognizable anthropomorphic form as well as attributes, clothing, weapons, vehicles, etc. that are associated with him/her. Vishnu, for example, has been represented with four arms bearing the conch shell (an iconography which ties him ideologically with the primeval aqueous situation and the act of creation), a sun disk (Vishnu being originally a sun god), the lotus (the floral symbol of creation and rejuvenation), and a mace (for power). He has also been commonly represented by his *avatar* Krishna, the blue-skinned, playful god of popular Hinduism. Shiva, too, is represented in many ways—for example, as God of Dread and Terror (in his Bhairava aspect), as the Destroyer, as the half-male, half-female god, as the Lord of the Dance. In each of his manifestations, he is associated with a particular set of attributes and objects which identify his different roles. In statues of him as Lord of the Dance, Shiva's movements are regarded as symbolic of all movement within the universe, of both creation and destruction. Represented in these works in anthropomorphic form, he possesses four arms to show his diverse capabilities and powers. An arch of fire symbolizing the whole of creation circles the figure of the god.

Shiva's upper right hand beats a drum, thus symbolizing the rhythm of time, or the first beat of creation. A flame in his upper left hand represents the holy sacrificial fire or sometimes the fire of destruction. The lower right hand presents the *abhaya mudra* or gesture promising protection, while the lower left hand points downward to draw attention to the god's uplifted foot. Lifted in a circular movement around the body, the position of this foot is itself, in its uplifting buoyancy, a symbolization of the soul's longing for *moksha*. Under the other foot, the demon of darkness and ignorance is crushed. Thus every part of the body, every movement and every accompanying object, carries a literally symbolic content, in addition to the figure's *explicit content* as representation of the god.

Kali, one of the consorts of Shiva, is symbolized as a destructive power. A black anthropomorphic figure of terrifying aspect, she carries weapons in her four arms. A garland of skulls hangs ominously around her neck. Though these and other Hindu deities have generally been represented anthropomorphically, combination figures are not uncommon (e.g., a god who is half-elephant and half-child, a god with four heads).

#### b. ANIMAL FIGURES

Snakes are probably the most frequently used symbolic animal in the arts of the Hindus. This is not to be explained simply by their physical prevalence in the Indian subcontinent, but rather by the regeneration and re-creation ideas which the cyclical sloughing of their skin symbolizes. They present in Indian art and mythology a representation of endless time as well as of continual rebirth, and are therefore prominent in the representations of both Vishnu and Shiva. Many other animals accompany or serve as symbolic stand-ins for particular gods or goddesses, e.g., the *nandin* or bull for Shiva, the wild goose for Brahma, the boar for Vishnu, the alligator for Parvati, and the peacock for Kumara.

#### c. OBJECTS

The erect phallus or *linga* ("sign") has been an important symbol in Hinduism and has been associated particularly with Shiva worship. It is frequently found in the art works of the Hindus. In one sense, it symbolizes the god himself. Secondly, it provides visual representation of that ever re-creating world process which is a premise of the Hindu religion. With still another interpretation and significance, it represents the abstract and neuter core or axis (the Brahman Atman) around which everything in existence gravitates—of which the god Shiva is itself a symbol.

### 2. Other Symbols

#### a. LOTUS

Since the lotus has a strong capacity for beauty, despite its growth in an environment of mud and dirty water, it is considered a fitting symbol for the pain and suffering of human existence as described by the Hindus. Another interpretation of the lotus motif is that it stands for crea-

tion and rejuvenation of life. Both symbolic messages make this flower a fitting motif in Hindu culture.

b. SHELLS

The conch shell, with its characteristic sound, symbolizes for the Hindu the watery state out of which all creation was born. It is thought to represent the primeval sound of that act of creation, and therefore is religiously and artistically associated with Vishnu, the god of creation. It like many other symbols in Hindu art carries a multiple content—one which is linked to a particular deity, another which relates to a much wider concept in the religious tradition.

c. KALASHA

This object, which so often tops the pinnacle of a Hindu temple, has the shape of a waterpot. It is symbolic of the never-ending outpouring of the World Soul or Brahman Atman in the creative act, and is therefore an abbreviated sign for the monistic ideology of the Hindus.

d. AMALAKA

The *amalaka* ("stainless") is a round stone disk or ribbed cushion which often tops the pinnacle of a Hindu temple. This form is placed horizontally to emphasize the distinction between the spiritual world and that of material existence. Symbolically represented in the *amalaka*, the spiritual world hovers over the various states of life represented in the decoration of the temple below.

e. WORLD MOUNTAIN

The Hindu temple is itself a symbolic representation of the basic premises of Hindu belief. Not only is the structure decorated with numerous statues and reliefs which portray its gods and goddesses (i.e., *explicit content*); the building also represents literal symbolism of Hindu religious beliefs. The temple is related to the idea of the world mountain known in the Hindu religious tradition. Like the mountain, it has no front or back and little sense of specific orientation. All four sides usually have either real or imitation entrances which give the whole a sense of outpouring from the central core, just as the God, the Source of all creation, pours out in an unceasing creative flow. It is often pierced by a central shaft or core which provides another visual emphasis to this symbolism. The temple is thus not

only a center for the religion of the Hindu devotee in a physical and cultic sense, but that centrality is also emphasized in a literally symbolic way.

#### f. DUAL FORCES

The iconography of the Hindu arts reveals constant use of symbols for the dual forces which exist in nature and are also attributed to the Brahman Atman Who comprises and exhausts all being. The tension and interplay of opposites can be found in the statue of a god or goddess which portrays the deity as holding the powers or instruments of both creation and destruction. Another instance of aesthetic representation of opposing forces appears in those depictions of Shiva in which the god appears divided, from top to bottom, into two halves, the one completely male in physical features and dress, the other unmistakably female. The sexual opposition of the *mithuna* art, which was treated above as a category of *explicit content* or subject matter, is another important way in which the arts have symbolized this Hindu idea of dual forces.

#### C. Implicit Content

Probably the two most central ideas of Hinduism are 1) that of the *Unity or Centrality* of all existence; and 2) the illusionary realm of *Maya, the Manifold Existence*. Characteristics of the arts which provide aesthetic implicit translation of these ideas will be pointed out in the following pages.

As was evident in the foregoing sections, it was difficult to separate the examples of *explicit content* (subject matter) from *symbolic content* (or literal symbolism) in Hindu art, since the whole aesthetic vocabulary and message concerning the religious beliefs is so tightly bound to symbolism in its literal sense. *implicit content* is no less difficult to isolate. In defining the ways in which message-carrying is achieved through purely aesthetic means, therefore, reference will frequently be made to examples of *symbolic content*, with which *implicit content* of Hindu art is integrally related. The reader should take this as a further indication of the nature of things in Hindu culture, rather than as a hindrance to a clarification of the materials. Here the emphasis will be on the more subtle ways in which their relig-

ious ideas have been determining of the arts of the Hindus.

### 1. *Unity or Centrality*

Given the importance of the idea of the unity of all existence and of the Brahman Atman as source of creation in all its ugly as well as beautiful manifestations, we should expect that the Hindus would have expressed this idea in many ways. Of course, it is explicitly referred to in the subject matter of much Hindu art. In addition, we have cited examples of its literally symbolic expression: e.g., in the phallic symbol, in the *kalasha* waterpot, and in the temple as world mountain. These are specific visual figures which have been culturally designated as representative of the idea that Brahman Atman is the source and core of all existence. Now let us consider the more subtle means of style and structure through which the Hindu aesthetic elements have given representation of this religious idea. These provide evidence of the *implicit content* of the art.

#### a. IN ARCHITECTURE

The temple is itself a subtle portrayal of this Hindu belief about the nature of divinity. Both in structure and program for decoration, both aesthetically and functionally, it is stabilized by a central core. At the top of the temple, a protruding finial often provides a visual impression of the core passing through the body of the building, just as the prevailing essence of Brahman Atman permeates all existence. At the center of the main temple building there is a chamber known as the womb chamber or *garbha griha*, where the statue or symbol of the main deity of the temple resides. From this central holy of holies, the spiritual power of the deity radiates in all directions just as the Brahman Atman spreads out to all existence. Floor plans as well as decoration of the temples convey a sense of outward spread. Reliefs closet to the *garbha griha* are those of the higher ranking deities, while those near the outside are the more earthly figures. The pilgrim makes physical progress on the road to reunion with his god, and relief from the cycle of transmigrations, as he moves toward the central image where he experiences the supreme religious experience in viewing and paying homage to his god.

#### b. IN SCULPTURE

Whether created as free standing or relief work, much of the sculpture of Hindu culture is as implicitly expressive of Hindu religious ideas as it is explicitly and symbolically representative of them. In fact, sculpture has been regarded as the "supreme" medium for recording transcendent values.<sup>5A</sup> The image or relief is an instrument or tool to remind the devotee of the god, to help him reach *moksha*. In pursuance of this goal, bodies depicted in Hindu sculpture appear to predicate a center or inner point (*bindu*) around which they revolve. This spiral or rotary movement is found in the embracing bodies of *mithuna* couples, in male or female figures entwined with vegetal (notably tree and vine) or animal (especially snake) figures. It is even seen in many individual human figures of free standing or relief carving which seem to twist around an inner vertical axis. We have mentioned earlier that the statues of Shiva as Lord of the Dance are perhaps the quintessence of the visual arts of the Hindus. Their conformance to this impression of spiral movement adds *implicit content* to their *explicit* and *symbolic* modes of expression.

The implicit expression of the Hindu idea of unity concerns not only the centripetal movement arising from the longing for reunion with the World Soul; it is equally the centrifugal or outpouring creation from the One. In many pieces of sculpture, therefore, figures seem to emerge from the stone of their background as though they were thrust forward along the swirls of a cornucopia. Using another analogy, they appear as bubbles rising out of the depths of a pool of water. In both cases, they give to the viewer an impression that they are temporary ephemeral emanations from an abiding mater to which they will return. Figures often look as though they were being drawn or pulled out from the stone, or from the background of a painting, just as *maya* existence was drawn out in the creation process from the World Soul.

## 2. *Maya, the Manifold Existence*

Life or Existence, with all its lower and higher strata, is thought by the Hindu to be the illusionary realm of *maya* ("illusion"). It is unimportant and ephemeral in comparison to the reality of the Brahman Atman. Only when humans

learn the unreal nature of *maya* and the truth of its opposite, the World Soul, can they be released from their instinctive appetites and desires. It is only then that they can escape the false gods of worldly cares. It is only then that they achieve perfect peace and fulfillment in *moksha*..

This idea is reinforced in the *implicit content* of Hindu art by at least four stylistic and structural characteristics: a) seething movement and life; b) stylization; c) stratification; and d) buoyancy or flight.

#### a. SEETHING MOVEMENT AND LIFE

The exterior of a Hindu temple reveals a maze of sculpture and decorative detail. Figures of plants, animals, humans and supernatural beings cover the sides of these structures, giving implicit expression to the idea of the manifoldness of existence. The temple facades, in fact, seem to throb with life and activity. This aesthetic expression of *maya* quality is more apparent on the exterior of the building, in contrast to the inner shrine and "home" of the god at the core of the building. With each movement inward toward the central or core chamber in which the image of the god resides, the program of decoration recedes from its earthly iconography to a progressively more spiritual one, leaving behind illusory and ever-changing life in order to concentrate instead on the unifying Principle or Force behind all existence.

Relief sculpture and individual statues are no less indicative of this *implicit content* of the notion of *maya*, or manifold existence. Individual figures give the impression that all life and all creation are in a constant flow of relentless evolution and involution. They convey a feeling of bodily action, of mobility, of "throbbing" and even violent motion. Zimmer speaks of a "growing or expanding form" in the artistic figures of the Hindus.<sup>6</sup> Nothing is static, nothing abiding. Only the relentless flow of the process of birth, growth, decay and death remains. This is true for the individual as well as for the universe.<sup>7</sup> Reliefs therefore even depict events in process of happening (e.g., the colossal Shiva from Parel, near Bombay, in which many figures grow out of the central lowest one; "The Descent of the Ganges," a seventh century rock-cut relief at Mamallapuram.)

### b. STYLIZATION

The visual arts of Hindu culture have also sought to implicitly express the idea of *maya* through stylization. Since this life has only a pseudo-reality, naturalism is of little importance in Hindu art. For the Hindu, reality resides not in the earthly shape or form of the object or creature itself, but in its relation to some aspect of the Transcendent. Sheer imitation of nature, therefore, has held little attraction for the Hindu artist or the Hindu viewer. Stylization of the characters, objects and events of this illusory and ever-changing life de-emphasizes the importance in order that the viewer may concentrate instead on that unifying principle behind all existence. Natural objects are bent and molded and even distorted in order to convey this religio-cultural message. Scenes and figures are important for their implicit message rather than for their depiction of nature. One might say that the Hindu views events and creatures of this world as mere puppetry which he or she looks down upon from all angles as a giant surveying a Lilliputian world. As artist or viewer, he/she sees through it, recognizes its transient quality and its pretence of actuality. Multiple perspective and a lack of concern for naturalistic depth are apt ways by which to imply the content of the Hindu religious beliefs.

Composition or arrangement of sculptured figures has also carried this demand for focus on the spiritual rather than the material, for stylization rather than naturalism. Sometimes with color, sometimes with vegetation, sometimes with architectural compartments, the artist encloses his figures in receptacles which set them apart from the ordinary world. The iconographic message rather than naturalistic representation is the goal of the sculptor or painter. Human bodies are disjunctly conceived, each part seeming to perform its symbolic function, rather than contributing to a naturalistic whole.

Since humans are part of this *maya* pseudo-reality, since each person is but one instance of the myriad manifestations of the Absolute in this illusory existence, individuality is of little import. Each player in the scenes of Hindu art therefore plays his role behind a mask and relies upon

the viewers to understand the deeper truths conveyed in the art work.<sup>8</sup>

#### c. STRATIFICATION

Life presents to the Hindu a series of strata. Each soul starts its round of existence in a given station. The inexorable law of *karma* dictates that each man's thoughts, words and deeds—his "actions"—will determine his future in this life. It also determines his fate in future lives as he seeks to come closer to his goal of reunion of his individual soul with the World Soul. The Hindu devotee is constantly striving to move upward through this hierarchy, as he/she becomes perfected in the perception of Ultimate Reality.

This stratified progress toward *moksha* is implicitly expressed in a number of ways in Hindu art. It is implied in the tier upon tier of decorative sculpture and porticos as the eyes are drawn toward the crown of a temple structure. Inside the building there is a similar aesthetic portrayal of movement toward a goal. We have already mentioned the progressive stages of the floor plan and iconography leading from the *maya*-like exterior to the central image chamber. Even a single sculptured relief will often be composed of a number of horizontal bands, stratifying the figures within the scenes as all creatures are stratified within the world of *maya*. Some of the creatures in the lower strata seem almost crushed beneath the burdens above them, a reflection of the situation of the lower strata in real existence.

#### d. BUOYANCY OR FLIGHT

There is a lightness or buoyancy depicted in many of the figures of Hindu art which is too common to be accidental or meaningless. Perhaps it too should be interpreted as an example of *implicit content* in the arts, in this case expressing that basic religio-cultural belief in the leap to *moksha*. Figures seem to float or fly. Gods and goddesses are generally less weighty in appearance than earthly creatures, but even the latter often convey a feeling of lightness. Dancelike images soar, as though caught by the artist in flight. Their feet fail to touch ground. Seated figures seem suspended in air rather than resting solidly on their mounts or chairs.<sup>9</sup>

## TRANSCENDENCE SYMBOLIZATION IN ISLAMIC ART

### The God-View

Now let us turn to another of the world's religions and see how it has expressed its basic ideas about God through aesthetic means. The religious theme that has dominated Islamic being and thinking is that God is One and that He is an utterly transcendent Being, a Deity Who is completely other than anything in the world of nature. God or Allah is the Creator of all that lives or exists in the universe; yet He is never to be equated with anything in His creation, lest His transcendence and oneness be mitigated. He is thus a Being Who is all powerful, omniscient and utterly transcendent, Who participates in neither incarnation nor immanence. On the contrary, God, for the Muslim, remains forever the abstract, the unknowable, the all encompassing Power, dispensing His benevolence and justice in this life and the next to all peoples, in all places. His communication with man has taken the form of revelations sent to His prophets (e.g., Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad). In fact, God says in the Qur'an that He has sent messengers to all peoples of the world.<sup>10</sup> But the uniform message of monotheism revealed to all the prophets was altered and distorted over the centuries. Subsequent purifying revelations were therefore necessary. The last of these, the revelation to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century of the Christian era, came in the form of a "book" to be recorded verbatim. Islam teaches that this precise revelation in the very words of the Almighty—the Qur'an—obviated the need for future revelations of the monotheistic doctrine.

The monotheistic doctrine revealed by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad is known as *tawhid* (i.e., "the act or action of making one"). It is this religious theme which is the core of the religion of Islam and the cornerstone of Islamic culture. This notion of the utter transcendence of the one and only God has permeated and determined every aspect of Islamic life. It has certainly been a powerful factor in determining the nature of the Islamic arts.

## The Artistic Expression of the God-View

### A. Explicit Content—An Abstract Art

Since God for the Muslim is an utterly and unfailingly transcendent and abstract deity, no being or object in nature is proper representative or descriptive symbol for Him.<sup>11</sup> In consequence, Muslim art has never depicted Allah in anthropomorphic or zoomorphic form, and in fact, fosters a distaste for the association for the Divine with any figure from nature. All forms of religious image are emphatically rejected. The closest thing to a visual representation of God in Islamic art is His name, "Allah," rendered in beautiful calligraphy, or His words, i.e., lines from the Qur'an, carefully executed.

The Islamic doctrine of *tawhid* did not only deny the figural representation of God. It also affected the subject matter, i.e., the *explicit content*, of the Islamic arts in general. When the artist sought to create a work of beauty, he rejected figural representation. This tended to draw the attention of the viewer away from nature in order to contemplate and derive an intuition of the completely-other-than-this-world Ultimate Reality. This negative reaction to figural representation had its positive corollary. It caused Muslim artists to explore the infinite possibilities for other subject materials which would be suitable in an abstract art. In this pursuit they developed a rich calligraphic art (probably the most important art form in Islamic culture), and a vast vocabulary of motifs. This motif vocabulary includes both abstract figures (calligraphy, as well as geometric and non-geometric shapes), as well as shapes from nature. The latter comprise denaturalized vegetal motifs (leaves, vines, flowers, fruits), lifeless objects from nature (cloud bands, water and waves, vases and pitchers, shields and emblems), and architectural components (arches, niches, pillars, etc.).<sup>12</sup> The representation of living creatures (human or animal) plays but a minor role in the motif vocabulary of Islamic art. Figural representation of living creatures is never used in religiously significant objects or structures. Instead, it is found primarily in works

for private use. These have not been given the popular support and esteem that a communal aesthetic conscience accords to that art which is unreservedly accepted.<sup>13</sup>

The neglect of figural representation cannot be explained as the result of a lack of artistic ability or inferior training, as some art historians have supposed. Nor is it a sign of primitiveness, or simply the result of prohibitions in the Qur'an, the *hadith* (anecdotes from the life of the Prophet Muhammad) or the *shari'ah* (Islamic law). In fact, there are no Qur'anic prohibitions against figural art. Those in the *hadith* and *shari'ah* are themselves the result of a deeper religio-cultural aesthetic goal, rather than the cause of such a predilection in the arts. Much more determining of all these facts is the view of Ultimate Reality which the Muslims hold. Abstraction in the arts of the Islamic World is an indication through *explicit content* of the message of the peoples who produced that art. Instead of an accentuation of those characteristics of a God-immanent nature by which the Hindu sought to express Ultimate Reality, the Muslim chose his motifs and de-naturalized his subject matter beyond description, and that, as Creator God, He is completely other than His creation.

### B. Symbolic Content

While the practice of investing visual symbols with specific meanings or associations is one of the most important features of Hindu art, it plays almost no role in Islamic artistic expression. Some scholars have suggested that this rejection of the use of the abbreviated, culturally significant conventions known as symbols is due to an abhorrence of idolatry which was inherited by the early Muslims from their Semitic forerunners. This argument might be applicable to the art used to produce a religiously significant item, but the truth is that the lack of symbolic expression (in the limited and literal sense of the term) extends to all aspects of art production in Islamic culture. Certainly, an additional explanation is necessary. This explanation can be derived from the Islamic doctrine of *tawhid*.

Since God is transcendent and not in any sense immanent in nature, no natural object can be "stand-in" for

Him. No shape or body from nature can represent any aspect or characteristic nor any value of the Divine. In consequence, no symbol is suitable for representing value or ideas. Even the crescent, which is sometimes associated with Islam, plays no significant role as a symbol in Islamic art. It may be used as a shape for design purposes, but it carries no symbolic meaning for the Muslim viewer. It was only assigned such a role in the minds of the non-Muslims of Europe because of its association with the Ottoman Turks.

### C. Implicit Content

*Implicit content* is the level of aesthetic translation of ideas which has been most affected by the religious idea of *tawhid*. Here we find the most significant and determinative characteristics of Islamic art. It is true that subject matter or what we have called *explicit content* has been crucially determined by the Islamic view of Ultimate Reality. But even there, the possibility is open for the use of motifs and subject matter of various kinds, so long as they are presented with an Islamically congruous treatment, so long as they are presented with an Islamic style and structure.

It is therefore not so much the subject matter or the motifs used which make a work of art Islamic rather than non-Islamic—i.e., determined by *tawhid* rather than merely the creation of an artist who is a statistical Muslim. An understanding of this deeper and more subtle level of aesthetic symbolization is actually synonymous with an understanding of the structural and stylistic principles which govern the two-dimensional surface patterns on a building, fabric or plate, the three-dimensional architectural, the musical,<sup>14</sup> and even the dance<sup>15</sup> creations of the Muslim peoples. An understanding of the "Islamic" in art is not merely one of solving the question of what iconography, what motifs (i.e., what *explicit* and *symbolic content*) are used or favored. In addition—and even more important—is the need to discover in what ways the abstract and denaturalized motifs favored by the Muslims have been used, in what ways the *explicit content* materials are put together. It is the characteristics exemplifying these more subtle aspects of symbolic expression which in particular distinguish

Islamic art from the art of any other tradition.

### 1. *The Infinite Pattern*

Islamic art involves the creation of "infinite patterns." Whether done in metal, in wood, in textiles, in bricks, in words, in sounds, in movements, or in three-dimensional architectural monuments, these works exhibit organizations which have no beginning or end. Just as name after name was created to describe the one and only God (Qur'an 59:22-24), so the artist painted, carved, wrote or sang one pattern, then another, and still another. Even the boundaries imposed on him by the edge of the design seem to be arbitrary interruptions of the pattern and never imply a finality of the succession of design elements. The very inconclusiveness of the design emphasizes the implicit aesthetic expression of the nature of Ultimate Reality which the Islamic art work suggests.

This should not lead us to imagine that the individual pattern itself or the complex of patterns to which it belongs, is a symbol, in the literal sense, of Divinity or of any aspect of Divinity. It is instead an aesthetic means to help the viewer intuit infinity, and thus elicit a deep and awe-inspiring notion of the transcendence of God. For this reason, the pattern is never given the status of holiness; it never becomes an idol or object of worship. Nothing in nature, not even the infinite pattern, can be equated with the Transcendent by the person possessed by the doctrine of *tawhid*. Islamic art thus allows the Muslim to remain true to the belief that God is the completely abstract, transcendent and infinite Being.

#### a. DIVISIONS RATHER THAN OVERALL UNITY

The infinite patterns of Islamic art have further characteristics which reveal their relationship to the God-view and exemplify *implicit content* in their art. In order to achieve the impression of infinity, Islamic designs are structured to comprise a series of separable components. Each of these units or "modules," is independent and satisfying in itself, yet loosely combined with other units in some form of larger organization. The eye or ear can experience one, then another, and another in a series which has no more confining limits than the available time of the performer

and listener, the ingenuity of the artist, or the boundaries of the design space.

The constituent parts of an Islamic work of art are not evolved, one after the other, in a seemingly inexorable chain simulating a growth-like, organic development. There is no single focal point to which all minor elements of the design draw attention and subordinate themselves. Instead of a single climax and decisive conclusion, an Islamic work of art utilizes divisions, symmetry and repetition to produce a series of aesthetic units. Islamic art, therefore, might be described as revealing a succession of mini-climaxes of comparable emphasis and importance rather than evidencing one major climax. Even the Islamic miniature painting has no central figure around which other elements of the picture are grouped. The architectural floor plan of an Islamic palace such as Alhambra in Spain or the Fatihpur Sikri in India reveals no single unity for attention or aesthetic focus. The viewer or participant therefore can begin to experience a work of Islamic art at any point in a two-dimensional design, at any verse of poetry or song, at any point within a building or architectural complex.

In its endeavor to express this open-ended structure, the Islamic work of art carries the participant viewer beyond the limits of the art work as the pattern is interrupted, before its completion, at the outer limits of the picture, carpet or wall. Not only is the imagination called upon to complete the shape of the medallion, of which only a quarter is shown at the corner of a rug; but the crenellations on the top of a building facade and the outward projections on the page of an illuminated Qur'anic manuscript demand that the imagination of the viewer continue beyond the physical limits of the work of art. Even rigid borders of a picture dome or minaret. These elements of the picture break through its borders in their effort to provide another hint of the *implicit content* of Islamic art. The art work thereby imparts to the viewer an intuition, though not a literal symbol, of that which is beyond sense, beyond knowledge—in other words, God.

#### b. SUCCESSIVE COMBINATION

The infinite patterns of Islamic art are not only implicitly

expressive of the linear infinity which has been described above. They also evidence a kind of geometric infinity in the successive combinations of their many parts. The Islamic design is created, first of all, from a combination of abstract or stylized motifs, involving symmetry and repetitions, in order to form design modules or units. Any one of these modules evidences an autonomy and aesthetic satisfaction which allows the viewer to contemplate it as a separate and satisfying unit. If we analyze a work of Islamic art, we find that the module, as an entity, is also subjected to symmetrical and repetitive combination with other modules in order to create a still larger organization or "modular complex." Even this modular complex can be seen as basic unit for further successive combinations with other like or different unity. These result in larger, more elaborate multi-unit structures which continue until the edge of the plate, the frame of a picture, the sky above the facade or the outside extremities of a building physically arrest the pattern's successive combinations. Any "view" or portion taken from an imaginative Islamic design will be just one of the possible successive combinations of constituent elements which make up its pattern. Even that overall design itself gives the impression of being a "cut out" from a larger master design.

### C. INTRICATE MOVEMENT

The designs of Islamic art move the eye, the ear, the mind with a proliferation of minute details. The tiny flowers traced with a single—or double—haired brush by the miniaturist, the intricate geometric designs of an inlaid table, the complicated floral patterns of a carved stucco facade, the melodic intricacies of a *tasqasim* musical performance—all achieve their aesthetic results with small and intricate movements. These miniscule patterns catch the trained viewer or listener at any one of their many centers or points of aesthetic departure and draw him persistently to new areas. Up or down, in or out, to right or to left, or perhaps in several directions at once, the eye, the ear, or mind is caught up in the aesthetic movement of the infinite patterns.

#### d. *DAFAQAH*

As each infinite pattern is completed or understood, the spectator feels a launch of his spirit with this success, and he moves to a new division or successive combination of the pattern. The term *dafqah* has never to my knowledge been associated with the non literary arts, but its fittingness warrants its being adopted to designate the mini-climaxes which punctuate any Islamic aesthetic organization or pattern.

Movement seems to increase as the spectator is caught up in the aesthetic activity and the many elements, units and combinations which make up the design are encountered. This increased momentum is produced in part through technical means. For example, the artist can increase the proximity, the complexity, the interrelation, as well as the actual number of his pattern components. Equally, the movement may be increased within the spectator himself. The eye and mind grasp the first module or unity of the design and experience its *dafqah* release. Then the spectator moves to another similar unity, or to a larger, more inclusive complex of modules and motifs. With each step in this process of moving from division to division, from combination to combination, the viewer becomes more proficient at design unity discovery in that work of art, thus enabling the rate of discovery and comprehension to increase in tempo. Even when the artist and viewer reach the extremity of the work of art, the imagination takes over to continue the creation of infinite patterns beyond the borders. The Muslim artist, of course, stops the execution of his pattern where the physical limits demand; but he always constructs that design and ends it in a way which hints of a continuation beyond.

No pattern is complete, no *dafqah* release overwhelming of all others. Thus the pattern, without being considered a symbol of the one God, or Allah, presents an *implicit content* which is unmistakably linked to the Islamic view of Ultimate Reality. It never represents God, for God is unrepresentable. Instead, it arouses an aesthetic activity within the spectator or listener which moves him through a series of beautiful visual or aural patterns until his imagination

breaks down in the attempt to continue the design beyond its physical limits. In this incapacitation, an intuition of the infinity of the Absolute, of the indescribable non-nature-ness of God is grasped; and the infinite pattern of Islamic art has fulfilled its goal.

## 2. Denaturalization

Stylization, or the disguise of naturalism, is another aspect of the *implicit content* carried by the Islamic arts in their aesthetic expression of the notion of *tawhid*. This de-emphasis of naturalism is of three types: a) the stylization of figures; b) the transubstantiation of materials; and c) the "camouflage" of forms.

### a. STYLIZATION OF FIGURES

Even when figures from nature were conscripted from the representational subject matter to serve as motifs for the abstract art of the Muslims, they were fitted into an aesthetic scheme consistent with the Muslim's religious convictions regarding transcendence. Whether dealing with human figures or those from the plant and animal world, artists felt no scruples about disturbing the naturalistic identity of a creature or object. Since the conscious or unconscious goal was to help members of the community achieve an intuition of the utterly non-nature, transcendent God, there was no need to be scientifically accurate in depicting a plant or rendering a leaf or flower in a way which reminds of its actual appearance in nature. An animal need not be portrayed as a living creature; instead, the body might be stylized, even distorted or used in a composite figure, in the creation of an infinite pattern.

Likewise, human figures, whether done in wood, ceramics, paint or metal, give little impression of representing real persons. Garments, revealing a wealth of decorative patterning, hide all evidence of the bodies underneath. There is a lack of articulation of body parts, and the gestures are for the most part stiff and unlife-like. These stylized figures seem to display an immobility even though their garments may be covered with the eye-catching movement of infinite patterns. Emotion in the faces of the human figures is rarely evident.<sup>16</sup> Human attributes and emotions are not what the artist seeks to disclose, even

when dealing with this atypical Islamic subject matter. Instead, the viewer is asked to turn his attention away from the mundane to contemplate a higher reality suggested by the *tawhid*-determined infinite patterns. Depth and perspective further de-emphasize naturalism in the subject matter of *explicit content* of the Islamic arts. Figures may be placed higher on the page to show their greater distance from the viewer, but they rarely elicit an impression of naturalistic depth. Some elements in an illustration may be seen from one viewing point, others from another. A pool, with its swimming fishes, for example, may appear as seen from directly overhead, while the figures near it are drawn from the side. Such devices of denaturalization of depth and perspective in Islamic art may seem similar to those utilized by Hindu artists, but they stem from quite different religious commitments. In Islamic art they represent an attempt to aesthetically represent the idea of transcendence, the nonnature of Allah. In the Hindu tradition, they point to the illusionary quality of *maya*, into which Brahman Atman pours his Being through creation, but which is only a vale of tears to be overcome by the release of *moksha* and reunion with the Brahman Atman.

The "Stylization" or "disguise of nature" suited to the Islamic arts goes beyond the denaturalization of figures from the human, animal and plant worlds. It also affects the aesthetic values of materials as part of the *implicit content* determined by the God-view of the Muslims.

#### b. TRANSUBSTANTIATION OF MATERIALS

In Islamic art there is no concern for creating an aesthetic impact by emphasizing the natural materials out of which the art object is made. For example, no attempt is made to impress the viewer of an architectural monument with the innate qualities of the building materials. We are never aesthetically confronted in Islamic architecture with "stoniness," "brickness," "woodness," or the properties of raw concrete. The preoccupation of the viewer is drawn to the intricacy of patterns to which the materials have been subjected rather than to the substances themselves. Materials are treated in ways that denaturalize or disguise

their inherent, natural qualities. Marble panels, rather than emphasizing the innate characteristics of that hard stone, are so pierced in the execution of a pattern that they present a screen-like or lacey impression. The hardness of the marble is thus visually dissipated in an elaborate openwork design. Bricks are cut in such intricate shapes and sizes in order to create decorative veneers that they look more like mesh or weaving than bricks.

Decorative overlays of wood, ceramic, brick, carved stone and stucco have been widely used to transfigure the base construction material of buildings as well as that of many smaller pieces of Islamic art. This camouflaging ornamentation aesthetically negates the significance of the basic materials and thus assists in revealing the *implicit content* of Islamic art. Instead of impressing the viewer with nature, the infinite patterns created by the artist lead to an intuition of non-nature Transcendence.

As a corollary to this regard for pattern rather than material which is a hallmark of the Islamic arts, we find much less interest in the use of precious materials for artistic creation than in other traditions. Some of the most successful of Islamic art works have been created from quite humble materials. The base materials used in a building or in a small object are often of little value; yet they are treated to decorations of such intricacy and interest that the humble base is transfigured into a work of rare beauty. For the Muslim, the lowly cooking pot is just as suitable a medium for carrying an Islamic pattern as the golden urn. Every article in one's possession, every act of daily life, should remind of divine infinity and of the duties for which each individual is responsible as vicegerent of God.

### c. "CAMOUFLAGE OF FORMS"

Structural facts are also de-emphasized in an Islamic work of art as a result of the Muslim's rejection of nature as vehicle for the expression of *tawhid*. This Islamic form of denaturalization has been noted by numerous art historians, but it has not generally been related to the implicit representation of transcendence, as we wish to claim here. Whether in the creation of architectural monu-

ments or of small religious and secular objects of beauty and utility, the Muslim has not been concerned with evidencing the structure of the art object. Instead, an overlay of decorative patterns disguises the mechanics of construction. This subordination of structural facts is another way of aesthetically negating the dominance of nature and instead giving expression to a preoccupation with a transcendent realm which is utterly nonnature.

This denaturalization device expressing *implicit content* is especially noticeable in architectural works, where the basics of structure are so crucial to the creation of the art work. Mass, gravity, apprehension of space or enclosure, awareness of overall structure—these are all aspects of architectural aesthetics which are down-played or negated by the Muslim builder. Of course the architect of a building or complex understands the forces of mass and gravity and erects his mausoleum, mosque or palace in conformance with sound engineering principles and precise size restrictions. But the aesthetic goal is always to draw the attention of the viewer to contemplation of the abstract God rather than to an over-awe or over-concern with His creation.

The cut-out filigree of stone and plaster dematerializes the mass of a dome or vault and gives it the appearance of being suspended, weightless, on its supports. There are walls whose mass has been so dissipated with intricate designs that they seem to rest effortlessly on slender pillars, denying any impression of their weight or the forces of gravity inherent in them. Architectural stress points are never emphasized in the Islamic building. Neither are structural members given a feeling of aesthetic isolation. Decorative openings and veneers camouflage those construction facts so that the attention of the viewer can be focussed on the intricacy of the infinite patterns rather than on the nature-based art of the engineer. Honeycomb-like decorations, rounded exterior corners, arched or filled-in interior wall junctures, and crenellated roof lines are other devices utilized or devised by the Muslim builders to soften and disguise the junctures of a building.

In furtherance of this "camouflage of forms," as it has

been called,<sup>17</sup> architectural space in an Islamic building never emphasizes the bounds of the enclosure. Of course, the Muslim architect is confined by his site and the functional needs of the building constructed; but within these limitations he seeks to create an aesthetic impression that space, like the Islamic two-dimensional design, is limitless. In an aisled hall a plan used so often for mosque architecture from the time of the Prophet Muhammad until today, the countless arches, pillars and aisles give the person standing in their midst a feeling of continuity in all directions—a continuity which seems to have no bounds of enclosure, no limits to its three-dimensional aesthetic pattern. In the domed structure, another plan used frequently by Muslim builders, the central dome, the semi-domes, bubbling smaller exedrae and the proliferation of windows combine to aesthetically negate the physical limits of the enclosure. Courtyards, arcades and porticos ease the transitions between the enclosed rooms and the outside living spaces in what amounts to a virtual interpenetration of inner and outer space in Islamic buildings.

This camouflage of forms, which acts as an instance of Islamic *implicit content*, is evidenced also in those Islamic buildings with facades of such tremendous heights that they hide any notion of the volume or outline of the buildings behind. Even when inside a room of an Islamic building, there is little aesthetic awareness of the structure as a whole. Instead, one room is the object of perception, to be followed by that of another and another, as the visitor moves from chamber to chamber, or from one group of rooms to another within the structure. Only after experiencing each portion is there an after-the-fact, recollected awareness of the entirety of the architectural design. The aesthetic effect of experiencing a building is thus similar to that achieved in experiencing a two-dimensional pattern of abstract or stylized motifs arranged in design modules.

The external limits of the structure are likewise de-emphasized in an Islamic building as another means for dematerializing structures. Rather than being set off on a mountain or in a vast open space, Islamic buildings are so enmeshed with the surrounding structures that it is

sometimes difficult to know where one building leaves off and another begins. This interpenetration results from an aesthetic demand in Islamic culture dictated by the doctrine of *tawhid*. It fulfills also the religiously determined goal of integration of the sacred and the secular in Islamic social life. No effort is made to set the mosque apart, for example, from the shops around it. Instead of an isolating separation, the goal of the town planners of Muslim cities has been one of integration and interpenetration of the various facets of community life.

### CONCLUSION

The insights gained from a study of art works as revelatory of the religious beliefs of a culture are manifold. First of all, it is obvious that such a study provides a much deeper understanding of the art products than a mere description of the archaeological and historical data which can be learned about them, or the superficial detailing of their visual or sound characteristics.

Second, such a study provides a key to understanding the people and the culture which produced that art. Countless histories have been written about peoples of the past or of our own century. Each of these historical records carries not only information about the designated people, but also much that can be read between-the-lines—and even in-the-lines—about the interpreting author. The historian often distorts the picture he “paints” for us, but the art work of any people can never lie. The artistic “translation” is a more difficult message to penetrate, but is a considerably more reliable document for those who can “read” its message.

The third benefit of the interdisciplinary study of religions and the arts is probably the most important one. It is the contribution it makes to our understanding of ourselves. Having penetrated, on a foreign and neutral ground, the relationship between an art tradition and the beliefs that determine it, students of such studies are able to look at the art of their own traditions with “new eyes.” They would have conditioned themselves to understanding art, not as an entertaining and expendable aspect of culture, but as

an important message carrier and reinforcer of the dominant ideas of their own society. An aesthetic awareness would thus be created which would obviate such statements as—"I don't know why I like (or dislike) this art." "I don't know what I like in art." "Art appreciation is all a matter of individual taste." A realization would result of the important changes in ideology that have spawned innovations in artistic style and content in the past, and that are just as surely occurring in our contemporary world. It is only with such awareness that an aesthetically conscious audience can evolve. Only then can our societies, or religious communities, our nations, our fellow humans effect a beneficial influence on the future direction of the arts. Given the educative and value-imparting functions of art, this cannot fail to be an important mission for the religiously, the socially and the politically conscious citizen of any part of our globe—in our time, as well as in any future age.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>“The structure of the human being is such that man cannot live his life or understand himself without some ultimate concern that he takes as the that-beyond-which-there-is-nothing of this world. This is indeed his god and the articulation of this life in terms of it is his religion” (W. Herberg, “God and the Theologians”, *Encounter*, November, 1963, quoted in David W. Blam and James L. Henderson, *Art and Belief* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>“For quite early, before he has begun to think abstractly, primitive man forms for himself a religious world-picture, and this is the object upon which the understanding begins to operate critically. Always science has grown up on a religion and under all the spiritual prepossessions of that religion...” (Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, tr. Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1946, Vol. II., p. 13). See also Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Vol. II. pp. 59, 383-384.

<sup>3</sup>The four values to be pursued by Hindus are 1) *dharma*, or the ritual conduct and virtues which have been assigned for each of the four different stages in the life of the devotee and for each class within society; 2) *artha*, or the acquisition of wealth and possessions; 3) *kama*, which includes all the emotional gratifications; and *moksha* (the highest value), which is the release from human cares and desires carrying spiritual and physical salvation from the birth/death cycle.

<sup>4</sup>A Brahmanical text reads: “For the support of the devotee, Brahman is embodied in manifold murtis (images, icons)” (quoted in Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Cosmic Art of India: Symbol (Murti), Sentiment (Rasa) and Silence (Yoga)* (Bombay: Allied Publishers Private Ltd., 1965), p.94).

<sup>5</sup>The Hindu temple at Khajuraho is a striking example of a temple incorporating a proliferation of mithuna art. See Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1946), Vol. II, plates I-XXXV; Mulk Raj Anand and Stella Kramrisch, *Homage to Khajuraho* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1960).

<sup>5A</sup>Mukerjee, *The Cosmic Art of India*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), p. 130.

<sup>7</sup>Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols*, p. 131.

<sup>8</sup>Stylization is not a characteristic unique to Hindu art. Just as there are instances of *explicit content* (for example, birth scenes and death scenes) and *symbolic content* (e.g., the halo, the lotus, the snake) which are used in different cultural contexts, elements of *implicit content* can be found to pertain to more than one culture. This does not negate the importance of their relevance in any one tradition. The interpretation of that characteristic, its emphasis and its combination with other aesthetic elements give it entirely different significance within different cultural complexes. It is not then the mere existence of an iconographic, stylistic or structural element that conveys unique information about the religious views of a particular people. Instead, it is the interpretation of that inclusion within a whole complex of contentual and formal period within any art tradition.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, the Flying Gandharva Couple on the Durga temple, Aihole, 6th century A.C.; the statue of Shiva Nataraja, Cave No. 21, Ellora, 7th century A.C.; The Descent of the Ganges, a rock-cut relief at Mamallapuram near Madras, mid-7th century A.C.

<sup>10</sup>"To every people (was sent) an Apostle" (*Qur'an* 10:47). "For We absurdly sent amongst every People an apostle" (*Qur'an* 16:36).

<sup>11</sup>"There is nothing whatever like unto Him" (*Qur'an* 42:11). "No senses can perceive Him" (*Qur'an* 6:103). "Praised be He, the Transcendent Who greatly transcends all claims and reports about him" (*Qur'an* 17:43).

<sup>12</sup>See "Arabesque Decoration: The Motif Vocabulary," Chap. V, in Lois L. al Faruqi, *Islam and Art*, manuscript currently being published.

<sup>13</sup>Examples of figural representation are to be found in the 8th

century desert palaces constructed for the Umawi rulers. They play a statistically minor role in architectural decoration of Islamic buildings, and an even lesser role when considered in relation to the Islamic arts as a whole. Another type of figural art found in Islamic culture is miniature painting. These book illustrations do not appear until six centuries after the birth of Islam. They have been appreciated more by Westerners than by the Muslims themselves.

<sup>14</sup>See Lois Ibsen al Faruqi, "The Nature of the Musical Art of Islamic Culture: A Theoretical and Empirical Study of Arabian Music," Ph.D. dissertation (Syracuse University, 1974); "Muwashshah: A Vocal Form in Islamic Culture," *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (1975):1-29; "Ornamentation in Arabian Improvisational Music: A Study of Interrelatedness in the Arts," *The World of Music*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (1978):17-32.

<sup>15</sup>See Lois Ibsen al Faruqi, "Dances of the Muslim Peoples," *Dance Scope*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (1976-77):43-51; "Dance as an Aesthetic Expression in Islamic Culture," *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. X, No. 2 (1978):6-13.

<sup>16</sup>See Thomas W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 134, for that author's description of the battle scene depicted in an Islamic miniature painting.

<sup>17</sup>Richard Ettinghausen, "The Character of Islamic Art," *The Arab Heritage*, ed. Nabih Amin Faris (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 260.

**VII**  
**DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE**  
**AND ITS EXPRESSION**

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**GENESIS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE IDEA OF DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE**

The earliest "logos" doctrine on record is that propounded by Memphite theology.<sup>1</sup> It states that the God Ptah thought in his heart everything in creation and then uttered his thought. The act of utterance, of expression of inner thought into outer words, is the creative act which brought about the real existence of everything. Expression in words was a creative materialization of things, including a creation of the other gods. The genesis of the world and of everything in it was a progress from divine thought to divine word, and "every divine word came into being through that which was thought by the heart and commanded by the tongue."<sup>2</sup> Conforming with long-standing Egyptian religious wisdom, Memphite theology did see Ptah as the power in all things. His thinking and commanding were not only the origin of the existence of everything,

but equally, its sustenance and source of life, growth and energy. This notwithstanding, it was opposed—and hence, was not popular and did not survive—because it saw God as in some aspect prior to his creation. In other words, Memphite theology was rejected because of the grain of transcendence it contained. Somehow, it removed God from His creatures though He continued to act in them. The Egyptian wanted to see God in the creature, not beyond it. God, in his view, lived in nature. The ancient Egyptian was repulsed by any suggestion that removed him from God's proximity. That is why he regarded God's hierophany in nature as constitutive. He did not have to think God; he perceived him immediately in the phenomena of nature. Wherever he turned, he could tell himself, *Voilà* God. With this givenness of God, the Egyptian mind could afford to be abstract about God's character. *Amon-Re* was characterless, unknown. "No gods know his true shape. . . . No witness is born to him. He is too mysterious for his glory to be revealed, too great for questions to be asked of him, too powerful to be known."<sup>3</sup> This enabled the Egyptian to regard God's character as genuinely numinous, i.e., as mysterious and unknowable. He beheld, rather than thought, God; and he knew Him, the God, rather than his character.

The conception of God differed radically in Mesopotamia. There, the tradition has long established God as prior to His creation. As its creator and fashioner, He stood as it were beyond it, prior to it, ontologically as well as in His efficacious animation of it. The Mesopotamian saw God in the phenomena of nature; but unlike the Egyptian, he saw the hierophany only as the occasional appearance of the God, not as constitutive. Nature was for him a carrier—one could almost say an expression—of divine power, never identified with it; e.g., Inanna and her reed, Enlil and his storm, etc. The god or goddess was never either reed or storm, though all reeds and all storms were hierophanies of them. Equally, each god had his own domain beyond which he never went. Nonetheless, his realm was never exhaustively equated with him. His divine being was different and separate from the natural phenomenon though inextricably associated with it.

Both the Egyptian and the Mesopotamian felt themselves surrounded by God on every side because nature surrounded them. However, whereas the Egyptian *perceived* the divine presence *immediately* in nature, the Mesopotamian *deduced* the divine presence *mediately* from nature, i.e., he saw the natural phenomenon as an index which he related to the divine by an act of thought. For the Egyptian, God was *in* and *of* nature, logically equivalent to, or convertible with it, and nature was ontologically constitutive of divinity. For the Mesopotamian, God was *in* but never equivalent to or convertible with it. Abolish nature from reality: To the Egyptian, you have abolished God; to the Mesopotamian, you have made His effects imperceptible but never touched God.

The will or command of God was for the Egyptian legible in nature, just as divine nature was immediately perceivable. That is why morality was taken to be the science of nature, and its norms were called "the teachings." For the first time, moral investigation absolutely coincided with scientific investigation. The "command of God" was itself the phenomenon of nature. Nature was diversity; but its diversity was merely God's idiom of expression. It was varied, while Divine nature was one and the same, an underlying unity. Since this was not the case for the Mesopotamian, he sought to understand God by characterizing Him as well as he could through observation of God's effects. Such characterizations naturally arranged themselves into groups, and produced in due course a pantheon of different characters, each of which was perceived as possessing a different set of attributes or characteristics. Marduk, the greatest god of the gods, had fifty names, all characteristics of him, and he could be worshipped by the recitation of those names. Other gods had lesser characteristics. Evidently, the characterizations of the god which have been collected after observing the god's acts in nature, and were subsequently built up into a divine personality, replace the immediately-given phenomena of nature in Egypt. Abstracting the characterizations from nature is the work of thought; building them up into a personality is the work of the imagination.

The Apollonian revolution in Greece which built out of the rites of fertility and appeasement a pantheon of gods and goddesses in dramatic interaction with one another, was little more besides such work of the imagination. Its poeticality consists of an idealization component which differentiated it from the empirical generalizations of science. Idealization is the rearrangement and intensification of the characteristics observed in the hierophanic phenomena of nature. In both Mesopotamia and Greece, divine transcendence consists, first, in abstraction from natural phenomena, i.e., in regarding God as prior to nature; and third, in enabling the imagination to perceive him through such character-reading. In Greece, an additional step was taken to intensify and rearrange the characterizations, to harmonize or juxtapose them in different gods. Greece had remained closer to Egypt than to Mesopotamia by subjecting its idealization of the gods to nature. The Apollonian myth-makers have followed nature rather closely in their idealization. In consequence, their gods turned out to be personifications of the elements of nature raised to the  $n$  degree and rearranged so as to expose their natural individuation.

In contrast, Mesopotamia idealized in the opposite direction. Concerned with divinity's ontological difference from and priority to nature, its idealization (i.e., intensification and rearrangement) pressed away from nature. In consequence, their gods turned out to be transcending the hierophanic elements of nature and tending towards total otherness from nature. The imagination had to work here harder than in Greece, precisely because of this intensified stance from nature. The phenomena of nature lost not only the constitutive capacity they enjoyed in Egypt, but equally their capacity as indices of divinity. They became props for the imagination which carried most of the burden of perception of the divine. As a prop for the imagination, the phenomenon or element of nature enjoys a suggestive capacity whose purity is directly proportional to the transcendentalizing of the god in question. In the case of Marduk, God of Babylon, the Semitic transcendentalizing effort reached its pre-Abrahamic apogee as far as histori-

cal records give us reason to determine. The gods associated with nature have become, in the Akkadian epic of creation, *Enuma elish*, mere executives, attendants or regional governors for Marduk, the god of gods, who was elected to this post by the primordial assembly of the gods.<sup>4</sup> Marduk has no association with any specific element of nature. He is the creator of all and hence associable only with the "whole" of creation. His characterization is the richest of all the gods: "By his fifty names he shall be praised." He is the absolute ruler: In his hand is the "tablet of destinies." His will is the law of heaven and earth; Hammurabi as well as other earthly kings are only executors of the law. They may reward the obedient and punish the violators; but ultimate justification and condemnation belong to Marduk alone.<sup>5</sup>

## DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE IN PRE-ISLAM

### Mesopotamia and Arabia

Religion in the Near East has always been associated with the state. Indeed, religion always provided the state's *raison d'être*. This feature of the religious life is due to the fact that all Near Eastern religion is life-affirming and world-oriented. It means to make or remake history, to remould so as to perfect nature and enable man to maximize his usufruct of it. This connection with history has been the source of corruption in religion. Human life with all its passions, differentiations and motives, its thousand-and-one relativities, is a constant temptation to alter the religion to suit the person, or particular group concerned. Hence, religion has been oscillating between purity and corruption, a stage in which the voice of prophethood speaks in clear terms what God commands and another stage in which the voices of the concerned interpret or tamper with the earlier revelation to advance their cause.

The ancient states in Mesopotamia and Diyar al Sham (Greater Syria) rose and fell in quick succession. It was natural that the canons, definitions and imperatives of religion would also vary despite the permanent substrate of principles common to all. But especially since the middle of the second millenium B.C., when the territory began

to be invaded by non-Semites from the north, northeast and northwest who belonged to a radically different world view, the pull towards a closer association of divinity with nature increased. The gods' names, genders and the natural elements constitutive of their hierophanies rotated among them, but the interest in them as the divinities persisted throughout, despite the change. The cities and villages of Canaan and Phoenicia, for instance, found religious satisfaction in worshipping deities (El, Ba'al, Yamm, Mot, Ashtar, Eshmun, Milkom, Milquart, etc.) which were closely associated with natural phenomena, especially those of fertility. However, they were interested in these deities as generic divine powers rather than individuals—thus reverting to a situation resembling Egypt. They showed their faithfulness to the transcendent god by recognizing, in addition to the particular gods, Ba'al, the Lord of Heaven, the Mighty Lord of all the holy gods. In Arabia, for another example, the masses found religious satisfaction with the tribal deities which pre-Islamic Arabic literature has brought to us; but they added to these, two other levels of divinities: the gods and goddesses of Makkah, and above these, Allah, the Lord and Creator of all, Who never had an image, any tribal connection or hierophanic association.

In Arabia, another fact imposes itself upon us. That is the presence of the *hanīfs* whom tradition has described as strict monotheists, who rejected Arab polytheism, maintained a life of purity and righteousness, and rose above tribal loyalties. The *hanīfs* were the carriers of the best in the Semitic tradition. They kept up the notion of transcendence entertained by its ancient adherents and prophets; and, it would seem, even further developed it. Their rejection of tribal and Makkan gods and their abhorrence of their images marks them as transcendentalists of first calibre. They must be the media by which the Semitic tradition of transcendence had transmitted and perpetuated itself.

### The Hebrews and Their Descendants

Biblical scholars are agreed that before the Exile, there is no evidence that the god the Hebrews worshipped

was transcendent. The evidence surviving all edition of the Biblical text is overwhelming. So many passages speak of God in the plural for "Elohim" that a source-text is assumed to have been incorporated into the scripture in which God was indeed plural. These Elohim intermarried with the daughters of men and produced offspring (Genesis 6:2, 4). In another passage, God is referred to as a ghost which Jacob beheld "face to face," wrestled with and nearly defeated (Genesis 32:24-30). In a third passage (Genesis 31:30-36), Laban possessed gods which Jacob's wife Rachel hid under her skirts when their owner came into her tent looking for them. The Hebrew king is declared to be the "son of God" (Psalms 2:7; 89:26; II Samuel 7:14; I Chronicles 17:13, etc.) and the Hebrews, "the sons of God" in a real sense (Hosea 1:10; Isaiah 9:6; 63:14-16; etc.). The conclusion is inevitable that the Hebrew mind at that age did indeed strike a genealogical connection between the people and "their" god which does not become invalid even by their "a-whoring" after other gods (Hosea 2:2-13). In Deuteronomy 9:5-6, we read that God grants favors to the Hebrews despite their immorality and stiffneckedness, because they are "His People" and He is bound by His promise ever to favor them. Evidently such a god was not the transcendent God known later.

That the Hebrews were content to have a non-transcendent god, is attested by the fact that as far back as their self-consciousness goes—and hence their history—the Hebrews were to some measure ethocentrist.<sup>6</sup> This particularism may have well been expressed by their notion of God as "their father," of themselves as "His chosen and elect." Consequently, the nature of such a deity had to be conceived in non-transcendentalist terms. In opposition to this view, Biblical scholars point out that the Exile witnessed a great jump toward transcendence. They explain that this development was prompted by three influences. First, under the pressure for self-reexamination that crushing defeat brings, the Hebrews might have heard and listened to a pure transcendentalist view of divinity taught by the *hanīfs* of Mesopotamia. Second, they may have listened to the popular transcendentalist views of the Semitic Mesopo-

tamian and Syrian masses as well as the adherents and advocates of Zoroastrian religion. Third, their status as an element in a new world-order about to be born through the agency of a *goy* king (Cyrus) and a *goyim* people (The Persians), might have caused them to widen the jurisdiction—and hence, the nature—of the father-god. These influences may have caused Deutero-Isaiah to reform the old Hebrew notion of God.<sup>7</sup>

Under the influence of Christianity and Islām which continue to the present day, Judaism made further strides towards divine transcendence. The rabbis of Palestine and Iraq in the early Christian centuries of the Muslim World, especially Spain, North Africa and Egypt, have written treatises in which God is as transcendent as the best Christian and Islāmic legacy has conceived Him to be. In this regard, the writings of Mūsā ibn Maymūn, Moses Mendelssohn, Ibn Gabirol, Ibn Kammūnah, and Ibn Zakariyyā stand out among the best mankind has produced. In the contemporary scene, Abraham Heschel, Leopold Zunz, and Solomon Steinheim have continued the medieval tradition, presenting divine transcendence in an idiom comprehensible to modern man.

However, the basic doubt affecting divine transcendence in Judaism remains. This doubt has two causes. First is the Jews' continuing to honor as divine revelation a scripture which is open to the foregoing critique. Second, is their doctrine of election that is biological and, by denying the relevance of religion and morality, downright unethical and indeed racist. The adherents of Reform Judaism have for the most part abandoned the view of verbatim revelation of any part of scripture. Acknowledging the validity of Biblical criticism, they maintain that the Old Testament is the record of humans' views about reality which have significance for Jews in a more intimate way than the exhortation or reports of other wise humans in history. Being human and historical, the texts of Torah, Psalms and Prophets do not escape the relativities of history and must be taken as such. This did not convince Reformed Jews that immoral election must be equally subject to historical relativity and is unworthy of modern

Jews. Indeed, their rejection of the divine status of the scripture was the corollary of their doubt of the supernatural and transformation of Judaism into an ethno-cultural identity. This ethnocentrism leaves a back door open for relating to a societal archetype who is taken to be the "god" or "father" of the ethnic entity. This explains the continuing use of harsh, questioning, and critical, even disrespectful language in addressing oneself to God. The rabbis of old had done it; and yet none had dared use the chastizing language of Eli Wiesel's conversations with God. Shockingly tragic, the Holocaust of Hitler certainly was. But no tragedy whatever justifies the kind of criticism Wiesel and his colleagues today address to God. That God is dead, that He abandoned His creation to Satan, that He lost His divine concern and providence cannot be said by the person who believes God to be God. At any rate, condemnation of the tragic event in no way implies its denial as a decree of God which must be acknowledged as such.

In fact, Isaiah's contribution was the identification of Jahweh with Babylon's mighty Lord of heaven and earth, who says of Himself: "I am the Lord; and there is none else, there is no god beside me" (Isaiah 45:5-6, 14, 18, 46:9, 47:12). Such "growth" of Hebrew divinity united the best in Babylonian and Persian transcendentalism with the Hebrew notion of divinity. However, Isaiah's god remained bound hand and foot to "his people" as before; and he now hurled his new powers against their enemies. If he protected and strengthened some *goyim* in the process, this was only to the end of utilizing them as puppets in the service of the only purpose he ever knew: the welfare of his own people. Isaiah's built-in ethnocentrism denied him the possibility to rise to the ethical consequences of transcendentalism. Instead of being the Prophet of Jewish transcendentalism, Isaiah accommodated the ethnocentrist god to the demands of transcendentalism required by the new age and situation. His work prevented the complete triumph of transcendentalism among the Hebrews and denied the thorough acculturation to which the Exile had exposed them. The ethical enthusiasm of Mesopotamia which caused the earthly counterpart of the cosmic state

to be without frontiers and thus to envelope mankind, was incomprehensible. "All men in the four regions of the earth" are citizens endowed with the same rights and duties *vis-à-vis* "the Lord of the lands," "the first-being of all the lands."<sup>8</sup> Such thoughts must have remained utterly opaque to Isaiah.

### The Christians

The early history of Christian doctrine reveals three distinct sources of influence: Judaism, Hellenism and the mystery religions.

#### 1. *The Jewish Source*

Jesus was born a Jew and his first followers were Jews. He and they accepted the Jewish holy writings as scripture, and identified with the religious tradition of the Jews. Certainly, Jesus taught two doctrines novel to the Judaism which prevailed at his time: universalism and internalism. The first, Jesus opposed to ethnocentrism which, he thought, had corrupted the bone and marrow of the religion of God. To his mixed audience of Jews and *goyim*, Jesus said: "All ye are brethren.... Call no *man* your father upon the earth; for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be you called masters; for one is your master" (Matthew 23:9-10). There is to be no discrimination between man and man, certainly not between Jews and *goyim* on account of the Jews' descendance from Abraham. Jesus not only rejected the idea that the Jews are the children of God, but that the descendance bond counted at all. The suggestion that Jesus' own relatives were entitled to any priority over other humans even when everyday matters were concerned, angered Jesus and elicited the following reply: "Who is my mother and my brethren? Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:48-50; Mark 3:33-35). "God is able of these stones to raise children unto Abraham" (Matthew 3:9). God, he maintained, is good to all indiscriminately (Matthew 5:44-45); and this new message is to be conveyed to "all the nations" (Matthew 28:19), for all of them are equally deserving of the new revelation. Jewish

ethnocentrism was seen by Jesus as "shut(ting) up the kingdom of heaven against men." together with the Jews' custom of calling themselves the children of God, and God "their father," he found odious and intolerable. Not only God was not their father, but that their father was the devil whose lusts they "will do" (John 8:44, 47). In fact the Jews, especially their leaders—the scribes and Pharisees—interpreters and guardians of their religious tradition, stood so condemned in Jesus' eyes that he counselled his followers: "I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10). The first prerequisite of divine transcendence, namely, universalism, was affirmed by Jesus in direct opposition to Jewish ethnocentrism.<sup>9</sup>

Since Jesus inherited his idea of God from the Jewish tradition which he regarded as normative but needy of correction, it is reasonable to assume that for Jesus, there was but one God Who is the God of all men. "None is good save one, that is God," he said (Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19). Indeed, Jesus cleansed the Godhead of any association with the Jews other than that He is their Creator, as well as the Creator of all other men. This was a great reform which Jesus introduced, calling the Jews back to the (Mesopotamian) tradition of the *hanīfs*, to Semitic monotheism at its best, or the affirmation of one God as absolute, transcendent Creator and Lord of the world. It stands to reason that Jesus would care for his reform and that he would dispel any attempt at lessening or confusing the transcendence of God. Against such reasonable precaution, the evangelists ascribed to Jesus meanings contradicting divine transcendence. Although such ascription reflected the ideas of the ascriber-evangelist, not of Jesus, Christian theologians later referred to these ideas as proofs of the doctrine of the trinity.

It is alleged that Jesus called, or permitted himself to be called the "son of man," the "son of God," the "Christ" and "Lord." This, supposedly, constitutes evidence that Jesus regarded himself worthy of worship, a second person of the trinity. "Son of man" or *bar-nash/bar-Adam*,

never meant in Jesus' Aramaic world any more than a well-bred, noble man, or simply a human creature. This meaning of the expression is still held today in Hebrew, Aramaic as well as Arabic. In the Old Testament, the term was used in the Book of Daniel (7:9-14) and the similitudes of Enoch (37:71) in the same way, meaning moral excellence. Even in the synoptic gospels, the term does not seem to mean anything else. The very attribution of the term by the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus to all Jews, precludes *a fortiori* any understanding of it as meaning something metaphysically different from man. Indeed, in the Gospel of Mark, since Jesus was not called by that appellation except after baptism, and hence after his decision to dedicate his life to God's service, the term must have meant the same to Mark.<sup>10</sup> It is only in John's Gospel and Paul's Epistles that "sonship" becomes something mysterious and metaphysical.<sup>11</sup> This fact bears evidence of the foreign Greek source of the new meaning imposed upon the Hebrew/Aramaic word. At any rate, Jesus called himself "son of man," never "son of God." In John's Gospel, even that concept, namely, "the son of God," suffered another transformation as radical as the first. It became "the only begotten son of God" (John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18).

The term *Christos*, or anointed, meant the king or priest expected to rehabilitate the Jews and rebuild their Davidic kingdom. Though as man he is the agent or instrument of God's intervention into the processes of history, the *Christos* is through and through man. Otherwise, Isaiah would have never attributed the title to Cyrus whom nobody, not even his own subjects, mistook for anything else but human. In time, as the Isaiahan hope for rehabilitation was frustrated and the returnees failed to rebuild the Davidic kingdom, the Zoroastrian influence of eschatological messianism began to inject into the term an eschatological and hence mysterious reference. The messiah became a human of any age yet to come but still all too human. No wonder that to Jesus, such appellation was presumptuous. He not only never accepted it but counselled his disciples against its use (Matthew 16:20).

A third argument the later deifiers of Jesus bring is

derived from his statement, "I and my father are one" (John 11:30). That this statement is found only in John casts suspicion upon its source. At any rate, assuming its authenticity, what could Jesus have meant by it? Jesus had defined sonship of God as conformance with His will, as obedience to His commandments. "Whosoever shall do the will of God," he held, "the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother" (Matthew 12:48-50; Mark 3:33-35). Consequently, unity with God must be a spiritual communion whose only base is righteousness or virtue, doing God's will. Certainly there is a sense in which a lover can say "I and my beloved are one" without any implication of ontological unity, of loss of personality or fusion of individuality. To love or obey a person thoroughly, or to follow his directives, so as to make one's will totally harmonious with his, is indeed possible, nay frequent in human experience everywhere. The same is true of the teacher-pupil, and generally of any master-disciple relationship. Here knowledge of one person by the other can reach such degree of completeness as to warrant the claim of unity. Since the Jews had accused Jesus of violating the commandment of the Father, it was natural for him to defend himself by insisting that there is no discrepancy between him and God, that is to say, between what he says or does, and what God wishes or commands him to say or to do. To understand such unity ontologically is to mistake a spiritual meaning for the literal, to perceive a material percept in place of a poetical—in short, it constitutes evidence that the poetical imagination of the listener has not been at work.

The same misunderstanding is characteristic of the Christians' use of the terms *Kurie*, *O Kurios*, *Mar*, *Mari*, *Maran*. These terms mean master or lord, and they are attached to the demonstrative "the" or the possessive pronoun "my," or "our." Whether used by Jesus in reference to himself, or by his hearers, the term expresses his relation to a messenger sent by him whose commission is to perform the will of the sender. In this sense, any messenger-sender is a *Kurios* or master. Such is the case in Matthew 21:3 and Mark 11:3, when Jesus sent a disciple into a village to bring forth a colt. In all other cases, where the

term is used by Jesus' disciples, it is a vocative which implies respect and honor but not divinity, since it can be and is usually applied to any honored man. If Paul and other men with Hellenized minds misunderstood the term as meaning God, the fact tells about them, not about Jesus. If, on this basis, Christianity holds that "the cult of the Lord Jesus was inherent in Christianity from the beginning" and that "the eventual formulation of an explicit doctrine of our Lord's deity as the incarnate Son of God was necessitated by the fact that it provided the only ultimate intellectual justification of such a cultus,"<sup>12</sup> the assumption is that what some disciples thought of Jesus rightly or erroneously, is constitutive of Christianity and that it is *ipso facto* truthful of Jesus.

Another flagrant mistaking of the material for the spiritual, and hence of the literal for the poetical, is the argument between the Sanhedrin and Jesus. Anxious to prove him guilty, the Sanhedrin summoned a witness to testify that Jesus claimed he could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Certainly, Jesus could perform this feat in the spiritual sense, just as the statement said, "I will build another (temple) made without hands."<sup>13</sup> Obviously, there is nothing blasphemous in such a statement, if the "temple" is taken to mean man's relation of worship, adoration, obedience and service to God.

We may conclude from this discussion that Judaism was not a source working against divine transcendence as far as Christianity was concerned. The areas where Judaism itself compromised transcendence—namely, "Elohim" as a class of divine beings intermarrying with men, exclusivist ethnocentrism, and racist election—did not affect Christian thinking which developed in a direction opposite to that of Judaism. The Jewish tradition merely furnished the terms which Christianity used but not before transforming their Jewish meaning and investing them with new, non-Jewish signification.

## 2. *The Gnostic Source*

For three centuries before Jesus, Palestine and the whole Near Eastern world was flooded by Hellenism, an ideology and worldview deriving from the older roots of

Egyptian religion as well as the reaction of the provinces against Greek and Roman naturalism. It crystallized in the hands of Plotinus and it exercised a tremendous influence upon the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean among whom Christianity was born.

The central thesis of gnosticism, common to all the schools to which it gave rise, is that the essence of all that is spirit; that out of spirit it all came to be, to spirit it tends and will eventually return, matter and individuation being an aberration and evil; that at the center of all being is an absolute spirit which is absolutely one and eternal. Gnosticism agrees with pantheism and is often at the base of any cosmology affirming the unity of all being. But the deity or absolute it affirms is the opposite of anything empirical, relative, or personal. It is this that gave gnosticism its adaptability to Judaism, Christianity and to Islām, as well as to the other religions of antiquity prevalent in the Mediterranean basin. It is responsible for the widespread simile of spirit to light and the association of the two in all that pertains to the divine and heavenly category.

As a source of Christian theology, gnosticism furnished the idea that God is wholly spirit, that He is the Creator of all that is *ex nihilo*, and that creation took place through emanations, the chief of which is that of the logos, the word, which is as thoroughly spiritual and divine as God. The opening verses of John's gospel<sup>14</sup> bespeak pure gnosticism; and so do those of the Nicene Creed.<sup>15</sup>

These words of the Nicene Creed were themselves the words used by the gnostics for whom Jesus was "the Word" or "first Logos" or intelligence emanated from God. Such a logos would naturally be co-eternal with God, the Absolute, since the emanation from God is the very life and activity of God and is hence co-eternal with Him. The first Intelligence is also "begotten not made" in the sense of emanated, not created like worldly things. It is spirit of the very same spirit as God, and hence both it and god are co-substantial, i.e., of one substance, namely, absolute spirit or divinity. Of the Logos, it is certainly true to say that it is "Light of Light," "true God of true God," and "of one substance with the Father." Neither the ideas nor the vocabulary of gnosti-

cism are in any way opposed to transcendence. On the contrary, the contempt in which gnosticism held matter and everything material or creaturely, and its insistence on an absolute spirit that is one and beyond all creation, make it a force working not against but for transcendence. Indeed, the whole system of emanations of the Ennead, of *logoi* coming serially one after another while keeping their common substantiality, was designed in order to solve the problem of matter and plurality (i.e., creation) proceeding out of spirit and unity (i.e., God). The nearest that gnosticism came to non-transcendence is its association of God, the spirit and the *logoi* with light and the lights of heaven. But it must be borne in mind that for their earlier century, the sun was not merely a ball of hot gases, nor the moon a cold mass of black rock and dust. They were heavenly lights at which the soul of man never stopped wondering. "Light" is the fascination of human consciousness; not the waves of energy of the physicist. By identifying Jesus with the Logos, Gnosticism sought to digest the novel Christian movement, while keeping its notion of divine transcendence intact. That is why all gnostic Christians held tenaciously to the above-mentioned part of the Nicene Creed and dispelled the historical creaturely Jesus, along with his crucifixion and whole career on earth as a "phantasm."

The Docetists' principle: "If he suffered, he was not God; if he was God, he did not suffer"<sup>16</sup>—is perfect summary of the gnostic position *vis-à-vis* the threat to transcendence posed by the Christians. So is the famous statement of Arius: "God always, the Son always; at the same time the Father, at the same time the Son; the Son co-exists with God, unbegotten (in the sense of created); he is ever-born-by-begetting (in the sense of emanated); neither by thought nor by any moment of time does God precede the Son; God always, Son always; the Son exists from God Himself."<sup>17</sup> Saturninus elaborated the position beautifully. Identifying the *logoi* also as angels, virtues or attributes of the spirit, he said: "There is one Father, utterly unknown (i.e., transcendent) who made Angels, Archangels, Virtues and Powers.... The Savior... is unborn, incorporeal and without form.... He was seen as a man in appearance only."<sup>18</sup>

More clearly, Basilides said: "Mind (logos) was first born of the unborn Father, then Reason from Mind, from Reason—Prudence, from Prudence—Wisdom and Power.... The Unborn and Unnamed Father sent his First-begotten Mind—and this is he they call Christ—for the freeing of them that believe in him from those who made the world.... And he appeared to the nations of them as a man on the earth.... And he appeared to the nations of them as a man on the earth...wherefore he suffered not, but a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, was impressed to bear his cross for him; and Simon was crucified in ignorance and error, having been transfigured by him that men should suppose him to be Jesus.... If any therefore acknowledge the crucified, he is still a slave and subject to the power of them that made our bodies; but he that denies him is freed from them, and recognizes the ordering of the Unborn Father."<sup>19</sup> In fact, gnosticism was fighting desperately to save transcendence from certain ruin by dedicated forces. Who and what were these anti-transcendence forces? By nature, gnosticism was a view which appealed to the refined mind. It required an intelligence capable of grasping its abstract doctrine. Obviously, it was not a religion for the masses. Its metaphysics were too spiritual and lofty for the plebeian mind. The latter could understand and revel in the concrete, the material. If the material has a spiritual aspect to it which ennobled it and made it more respectable, all the better. But such an ideal cannot lose touch with the material world without losing its appeal. Christian gnosticism was hence hereticated and defeated by those incapable of rising to the lofty spheres it presented. These insisted on a real, historical, concrete human Jesus Christ whom they asserted along with the divine, eternal and spiritual logos. Little did they care that the creaturely human Jesus dealt a death blow to the transcendence of the divine logos.

### 3. *The Mystery Religions Source*

The third source of Christianity was the mystery religions of antiquity. These religions came on the heels of decaying Greek and Mesopotamian religions which in their last years were mixed with primitive Roman religion and with Manichaeism and Mithraism, respectively. Some

influence from Egypt through the Isis and Osiris cults was also added to the scene, presenting a vast array of cults and views of the world.

The elements common to nearly all these cults and views were a reflection of the general deterioration of world order, of the imperial states that had hitherto controlled it. A general moral and religious skepticism dominated the atmosphere as the public scene was shot through with corruption, egotism, crass materialism and hedonism and power politics, while the masses were immersed in poverty, disease and a miserable existence as puppets of generals and demagogues. The cults divided the masses, as they catered to their basic human needs in an hour of dying civilizations. First, was the need for a god to assume the burden of one's existence with which the individual could neither bear nor cope. Such a god, it seemed to them, would fulfill his function best by undergoing an expiatory death. Only in this way could the overwhelming feeling of guilt gnawing at their soul be relieved. Second, the need for abundant life expressed in rites of fertility aimed at reassuring man of the promise of children, crops and animals. Third, was the need for a general restoration of society to a past felicity which was lost in the age of decline. The eschatological projection filled the imagination with the desiderata of the deprived masses and half-satisfied their yearning for justice, for loving concern and wellbeing.

The cults of Osiris, Adonis and Mithras seemed best suited to answer all these needs at once. They were all sacramental, offering the worshipper personal catharsis through participation in the death of the god, effected symbolically by immolating a bull or goat, and by drinking its blood or a substitute (some juice, bread, milk, honey or wine). The participation was equally in the god's resurrection which cheered and reassured the worshipper with the good harvest in the fall, and with plentiful animal offspring and resurgent nature in the spring. Initiation into the faith was carried out by a baptism in water, performed by the priests of the cult called "fathers." All of these sacraments passed to Christianity with such little change that, at the time Christianity contended with these

cults for the souls of men, it seemed to Tertullian as if "the devil himself had inspired a parody of the Christian sacraments."

Above all, the mystery cults of the ancient world provided man with a god on which he could have a hold. The god was individuated enough to be a person, born hierophanically by a real bull or goat or pig, physically slaughtered, and physically consumed, or symbolically by means of real substitutes, identified with the forces of nature, the dying with winter and the resurrection with spring. The sacraments, with their principle of *ex opera operata*, gave the worshipper a guaranteed result. The catharsis they caused was real and felt whenever the faith was candid and the need was itself real. The myth was not demythologized, i.e., seen as myth; but believed in literally, i.e., seen as really and concretely true. Because of the elaborate rituals (*dromena*) which often extended over several days and involved bathing, shaving, eating, sleeping, strenuous exercises, as well as orgies, the language used in connection with the rituals was capable of being taken literally as well as metaphorically. When the Mithraic votary was finally brought before the gods, he could say: "I am your fellow wanderer, your fellow star," and the Orphic: "I am the child of Earth and of the starry Heaven. I too am become god."<sup>20</sup> Apuleis<sup>21</sup> tells of his participation in the rites of Isis: "I approached the very gates of death and set one foot on Porserpine's threshold, yet was permitted to return, rapt through all elements. At midnight, I saw the sun shining as if it were noon. I entered the presence of the gods of the underworld and the gods of the upperworld, stood near and worshipped them." After shaving his head, fasting and abstaining for ten days, he was "admitted to the nocturnal orgies of the great god and became his illuminate (*principalis dei nocturnos orgiis in lustratus*)." Lucius then reports that "now he (i.e., the god) deigned to address me in his own person, with his own divine mouth."<sup>22</sup> In every sense, the experience was both empirical and spiritual.

This is a far cry from the transcendent unitary God of Semitic religion Whose adoration and worship is a purely

spiritual exercise, carried out without sacrament, with no operative phenomena, and whose language is immediate and direct. The language of Semitic worship may carry a metaphor or simile; but it never points to any empirical reality or thing, and allows no more place to imagery than is needed to move the poetical imagination on its flight. Naturally, the transcendence aspect of this religion had to change if the religion was to be adopted. The mind accustomed to sacramental religious practice is ill adapted to the kind of abstraction which the worship of the transcendent God demands. And it is precisely this consciousness presupposed by these mystery religions which continued into Christianity as it travelled from the Semitic East to the Hellenistic West.<sup>23</sup> The sacraments, with the human needs to which they catered, constituted the underlying substratum: Above all, baptism or the rite of *praefatus deum veniam*, and the Eucharist, where the worshipper participates in the death and resurrection of the god. The god is wished dead and resurrected signifying a genuine *natalis sacrorum* or religious rebirth for him.

The names and personalities were a facade which changed without affecting the substance of the sacraments or their underlying doctrine. The crucified Jesus stepped into the place of the immolated god, and the doctrine was given the emendations necessary for the new religious ideology. It was the ethics, not the theological doctrine, that changed radically from over-indulgent hedonism to severe asceticism and self-renunciation. It was here that the revolution had taken place. Life—and world-affirmation became life—and world-denial. But here, in the field of the moral imperative, the question of divine transcendence was irrelevant. Indeed, what Christianity had inherited from Judaism was twisted around to suit the Hellenistic consciousness: The Hebrew scriptural descriptions of the deity, written by and for a Semitic mind, were shorn of their poetry and taken literally to support the doctrinal elements of Christianity.

Nothing is more reflective of this fact than the use Christian theologians have made of Hebrew Scripture to justify the notion of the trinity and thus establish the divin-

ity of Jesus. The book, *De Trinitate*, gives evidence that practically every quotation St. Augustine took from Hebrew scripture in support of the trinity was misunderstood by his Hellenistic mind. As a Christian Hellene, Augustine was incapable of understanding the Semitic way of talking about God.<sup>25</sup> Augustine's way of arguing for the Trinity was not the unique literalism of an un-poetic mind. It has characterized the history of Christian theology to the present day. Before Augustine, Tertullian sought to deduce the trinity from the plural "us" of Genesis 7:26;<sup>26</sup> and sixteen centuries later, Karl Barth tells us that the plural form of that same passage is evidence that God is a trinity, that one person, the Father, consulted with the other two, the Son and the Holy Spirit and jointly decided to make man in Their/His image.<sup>27</sup> The plural pronouns used by God (Genesis 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8, etc.) are a stumbling block for Barth's Western mind which is so literalist as to affirm maleness and femaleness in the Godhead because of Genesis' assertion in the same passage "male and female created He them" following "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him (Genesis 1:28).

Barth's thought moves from man to God and constitutes a flagrant case of anthropomorphism. "Could anything be more obvious," he argues in support of his view, "than to conclude from this clear indication that the image and likeness of the being created by God signifies...juxtaposition and confrontation...of male and female, and then to go on to ask...in what the original and prototype of the divine existence of the Creator consists?"<sup>28</sup> It is crude, to say the least, to suggest that, granted the nature of God is trinitarian, the relationship between the divine persons of the trinity is that of "begetting" and "bearing children."<sup>29</sup>

The case is not limited to those key sentences of the Old Testament which Christians have adduced as evidence for the trinity. It extends to those of the New Testament which are ascribed to Jesus and supposed to tell his idea of himself. "I and my Father are one," "I am the way," "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father," "You say so" said in response to the question, Are you the Messiah? etc. were all interpreted literally by Christians. The same words, taken

in their Aramaic original which Jesus spoke, and hence under the categories of a Semitic consciousness, would not furnish the evidence the Christian seeks. All of them impress me as ordinary statements of common parlance which can be heard even today in Arabic a hundred times a day in any village market place. Nobody would take them to mean what the Christian Hellenic theologians have claimed. This observation applies to those New Testament statements pertinent to the nature of Jesus which are ascribed to the disciples, such as their addressing him as "Lord," and seeking forgiveness of their sins at his hand, etc.

Contemporary theologians, anxious to speak to moderns but still standing within the mainstream of Christian thought, continue to affirm the same thesis, though in differing terms. Led by Paul Tillich, and generally affected by Immanuel Kant, they want to keep both transcendence as well as the historical (empirical, natural, human) reality of Jesus. Hence they arbitrarily assume that the transcendent God, like the "Brahman principle,"<sup>30</sup> or the "philosophical absolute,"<sup>31</sup> is forever unknown and unknowable unless He is concretized in some object of nature and history.<sup>32</sup> Tillich asserts that such "concrete element in the idea of God cannot be destroyed,"<sup>33</sup> and that, while polytheism—as affirmation of a divine concrete—will always tend towards transcendence, there can be no absolute monotheism.<sup>34</sup> Where absolute monotheism is declared, God, as absolute "monarch" over hosts of powers, angels, etc., will "always be threatened by revolution or by outside attack" like any other "absolute monarchy" on earth; or, as in the case of "mystical monotheism," where "the ultimate transcends all," God remains as abstract (God=X) and man's craving for the empirical divine continues. "This most radical negation of the concrete element in the idea of God," he writes, "is not able to suppress the quest for concreteness."<sup>35</sup> And in order to pave the road for the apotheosis of Jesus, Tillich went on to contradict himself by asserting that logically "mystical monotheism does not exclude divine powers in which the ultimate embodies itself temporarily."<sup>36</sup> Obviously, Tillich here has discarded the philosophical stance—and contradicted his earlier

definitions of absolute monotheism. In order to accommodate dictates of Christian dogma, he allowed himself to make untenable assertions about God as well as man. For, it is not true that transcendence is incapable of suppressing the quest of the concrete, just as it is not true that chastity and purity are incapable of suppressing the desire for other women. The presence of desire for other women does not make adultery a virtue. Neither is desire always and necessarily present. Paul Tillich has here followed the Hindu illuminati who tolerated the crudest paganism and polytheism "for the masses of the people who are unable to grasp the ultimate in its purity and abstraction from everything concrete, (as) history...in India and in Europe has shown."<sup>37</sup>

Having decided, therefore, like Tertullian, Irenaeus and Augustine, that Christianity must have both the transcendent God it inherited from Judaism and Hellenism, and the concrete God, he had to recourse to acrobatics to explain how the two can be kept in consciousness and expressed in thought. For this a new signification for myths and symbols became necessary; as they were the only tools with a sufficiently mercurial nature to accommodate the paradox.<sup>38</sup> Myth, symbols and parables, it is claimed, are "the proper language of religion...where God is the chief actor and where the story is symbolically true, i.e., will appear to be true (if the standpoint is that of) the religion to which one subscribes."<sup>39</sup> God, it is claimed, is immanently present in myths and symbols, as their meaning on a secondary level. But that is not merely an ideational referent which the mythical terms signify. It is ontological. "Jesus," the "Word of God," is not merely an attribute of the transcendent God signifying love and mercy and concern; for "when the Word becomes flesh, myth becomes history."<sup>40</sup>

Evidently, Christian thought has not yet outgrown its linkage to the mystery religions. What it digested of Judaism is a historical figurization, a context, as historians of religions would say. What it digested of Hellenism is a cosmetic superstructure which gives it pomp and circumstance. In its rock-bottom essence, the core of its religious

content, it remains true to the mystery religions with their immanent god dispensing his mana of holiness and salvation through the catharsis which participation in the sacraments brings. Here, transcendence is a decorative notion, inexpressed and inexpressible except when it assumes the modality of the concrete. Here, as Miles had said, the proper religious expression is "silence qualified by parable" and myths.<sup>41</sup> Here, finally, the myth is false— taken literally, ideationally true—taken figuratively, and empirically true— taken as symbol of the immanent God present therein—a treble-tiered paradox!!!

Since this was the state of "God's transcendence" in Christianity, the language expressing it was equally improper. Although Christians never ceased to claim that God is transcendent, they spoke of Him as a real man who walked on earth and did all things men do including the suffering of the agonies of death. Of course, according to them, Jesus was both man and God. They never took a consistent position on Jesus' humanity or divinity without accusation of apostasy and heresy. That is why their language is always confusing, at best. When pinned down, every Christian will have to admit that his God is both transcendent and immanent. But his claim of transcendence is *ipso facto* devoid of grounds. To maintain the contrary, one has to give up the laws of logic. But Christianity was prepared to go to this length too. It raised "paradox" above self-evident truth and vested it with the status of an epistemological principle. Under such principle, anything can be asserted and discussion becomes idle. Finally, the Christian may not claim that the Trinity is a way of talking about God; because, if the Trinity discloses the nature of God better than unity, a greater plurality would do the job better. At any rate, to reduce the "Holy Trinity" to a status of *in percipi* is heretical as it denies *una substantia* as metaphysical doctrine.

## DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE IN ISLAM

### The Human Capacity to Understand

The first point to bear in mind is that Islām does not

tolerate any discrimination between humans as far as their capacity to understand the transcendence of God is concerned. Divine transcendence is everybody's business; and in Islām it is the ultimate base of all religion, and all anthropology. Unlike the Hindus and Paul Tillich who, by their reserving of transcendence to the intelligentsia, open the road wide for polytheism and pagan practices, Islām holds all humans naturally—and hence necessarily—endowed with a *fitrah*, i.e., an innate *sensus communis*, by which to understand that God is, that He is One, and that He is transcendent. "Hold fast, therefore, to *the true religion* like a *hanīf*, which is the natural endowment with which all humans have been endowed. In this respect, there is no variety in God's creation of humans. That is the worthy religion" (Qur'ān 30:30).

There is no excuse for denying transcendence or compromising it. Two avenues have been provided for mankind by God through which to recognize the transcendent God. First, He in His mercy, has sent revelation to every people on earth to teach them that the transcendent God is and that they owe Him worship and service. "There is no people but We have sent them a warner... (Qur'ān 35:24; 25:51). "We have sent no messenger but to clarify Our message to his people in their own tongue" (Qur'ān 14:4) and "We have sent no messenger but commanded him that none is to be worshipped except God and that evil is to be shunned" (Qur'ān 16:36).

Second, including the cases where the revelation has been corrupted beyond recognition, there is the universal road of the *sensus communis*, open to all humans. Any exercise of this faculty will, if carried out with candidness and integrity, lead to the cognition of the transcendent God. For, as the Qur'ān has put it, every human is endowed with the capacity to know Allah. That is his birthright. To explain and clarify the point in detail, Islāmic thinkers invented the story of Hayy ibn Yaqzan (Livine, Son of the Awake) who grew up in a deserted island devoid of humans and hence of tradition, and who gradually led himself by sheer intellectual effort from ignorance, to naive realism, to scientific truth and finally, to natural reason and the

discovery of transcendent God.<sup>42</sup>

The *sensus communis* which Islām recognizes is different from the sense of the holy of Rudolph Otto and the historians of religions. The sense by which humans discern the holy or numinous quality of reality is certainly acknowledged. Islām, in other words, agrees with their definition of man as *homo religiosus*; but it adds to it the sense for divine transcendence and holds that without it the numinous reality recognized in religion would not be ultimate. For it may well be pluralistic as in polytheism, and/or naturalistic as in the Egyptian and mystery religions, but not ultimate. Ultimacy requires *tawhīd*, i.e., unization and transcendence of the deity. As the Qur'ān put it: i.e., "If God had associates, they would have sought His throne. Praised and glorified be He, far beyond what they claim.... If there were more than one God in heaven and earth, cosmic order would have collapsed" (Qur'ān 17:42-43; 21:22). Tillich's remark is true but only where the other beings are declared divine. Where God alone is divine, and all other beings including angels, demons, spirits, humans and all else, are creatures of God, there can be no threat to His position or authority. Therefore only a transcendent God can fulfill the idea of reason we call God. The question of ultimacy cannot rest with intermediate or plural gods. Only one God can be ultimate. If he is, He must be transcendent, i.e., beyond all else. Otherwise, His ultimacy cannot be maintained.

This is the first assertion of the Islāmic creed that "There is no God but God" which the Muslim understands as denial of the existence of any other Gods. It is equally a denial of any associates to God in His rulership and judgeship of the universe, as well as a denial of the possibility of any creature to represent, personify or in any way express the divine being. The Qur'ān says of God that "He is the Creator of heaven and earth Who creates by commanding the creature to be and it is.... He is the One God, the Ultimate... (2:117, 163). There is no God but Him, ever-living, ever-active (3:2). May He be glorified *beyond* any description! (6:100)...no senses may perceive Him (6:103) ...praised be He, the Transcendent Who greatly transcends all claims

and reports about Him" (17:43). In fulfillment of this view, the Muslims have been all too careful never to associate in any manner possible, any image or thing with the presence of the divine, or with their consciousness of the divine and in their speech and writing about the divine, never to use anything except Qur'ānic language, terms and expressions which, according to them, God had used about Himself in the Qur'ānic revelation.

Transcendence in language was maintained by Muslims around the globe despite their speaking all sorts of languages and dialects and belonging to all sorts of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This was the objective of the Qur'ānic dicta, "We (God) have revealed it in an Arabic Qur'ān (12:2; 20:113) ... we have sent it (the revelation) down an Arabic judgment (13:39) ... we have revealed it in the Arabic tongue (39:28; 41:3; 42:7; 43:3) ... it is We Who sent down the Qur'ān; We Who shall safeguard it; We Who shall collect it; We Who shall explain it" (75:16-18). Abiding by these dicta, Muslims treated only the Arabic original as the Qur'ān and regarded the translations as mere aids to understanding it, not as text. Liturgical use of the Qur'ān could be made only in Arabic. *Salāt*, the institutionalized worship, kept the form it was given by the Prophet on divine instruction. Moreover the Qur'ān gradually molded the consciousness of the non-Arabic speaking converts and furnished the categories under which religious matters could be thought out and religious feelings could be expressed. Any God-talk by Muslims became exclusively Qur'ān-talk, adhering scrupulously to the Arabic categories of the Qur'ān to its Arabic terms, its Arabic literary forms and expressions.

How did the Qur'ān express transcendence? It gave 99 or more names for God expressing His lordship of the world, and His Providence in it; but it emphasized the "Nothing is like unto Him" (42:11). Anything belonging to His realm or associated with it—like His words, His time, His light, etc.—the Qur'ān described as something to which empirical categories cannot apply. "If all trees were pens and all seas were ink with which to record God's speech," it asserted, "they would be exhausted before God's speech

runs out" (18:110). "A day with God is like a thousand years of man's" (22:47). "The Light of God is that of heaven and earth. Its likeness is the light of a lamp whose glass is a celestial star, whose fuel is from a blessed olive tree that is neither of the East nor of the West, incandescent without fire..." (24:35). Thus, empirical language—figures and relations from the world—are used; but with the unmistakable denial that they apply to God *simpliciter*.

### The Human Capacity to Misunderstand

Having asserted that humans are all endowed with the capacity to recognize the transcendent God, Islām does not assert that they all must have in fact achieved such recognition. In the terms of a hadīth (tradition) of the Prophet "Every man is born a Muslim (in the sense of nature, or a *Sollensnothwendigkeit* for recognizing Allah). But it is his parents (or nurture, tradition and culture) that Judaize or Christianize him." Departure from this primordial, innate monotheism, is the work of culture and history. Its sources are passion and culture; the former, when vested interest in a view elevates it to the status of dogma, of an article beyond contention; the latter, when the student disciple or seeker's nerve fails in the *épôche* requisite for grasping a truth not under the categories of his own culture. The first is evidenced by the reply of Heraclitus to the Prophet's emissary who called him to Islām.<sup>43</sup> The second, in the problems early Islāmic thought had contended with relating to the divine attributes.

Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians have entered Islām in its early days and brought with them the mental categories of their inherited cultures. The majority did not speak Arabic. Naturally, their minds, accustomed to think in terms of divine immanence, particularism and concreteness, could not readily absorb the radical idea of divine transcendence. They understood Allah in the only way they were accustomed to, i.e., anthropomorphically. They were called *Mushabbihah*.<sup>44</sup> They took the Qur'ānic descriptions of God literally, and fell into the unanswerable abyss of questions regarding divine nature. If as the Qur'an says, God spoke to the Prophets and angels, then

He must have a mouth and tongue! And if He sees and hears, He must have eyes and ears! And if He sat on the throne, or descended from it, then He must have a body and a posture. Al Shahrīstānī (died 548 A.H./1153 C.E.) following al Ash'arī (d. 322 A.H.; 935 A.C.), tells us that the Mushabbihah (anthropomorphists) namely, Mudar, Kuhmus, Ahmad al Hujaymī, Hishām ibn al Hakam, Muhammad ibn 'Isā, Dawud al Jawāribī and their followers held that God could be interviewed and embraced; that He visits people and is visited by them; that He has organs like and unlike those of humans; that He has hair, etc. They even falsely ascribed to the Prophet sayings confirming their claims. Al Shahrīstānī took care to inform his readers that most of these claims were adopted from the teachings of Jews—Qara'ites—and singled out hadīths pertinent to the creation of Adam in God's image, to God's regret for the Deluge, His development of an eye-ache of which He was relieved by the angels, etc.

The Mu'tazilah were the first to rise to the threat this anthropomorphism posed for Islām. In their enthusiasm, they shot at and beyond the target at the same time. The divine attributes, they said, were of the nature of literary similes which must be interpreted allegorically and their abstract meaning extracted. That God spoke is an allegorical way of saying that revelation has been conveyed to man; that He sees and hears means that He has knowledge; that He sits on the throne means that he has power; etc. This was sufficient to refute anthropomorphism and cut it out from the Islāmic tradition once and for all, but it created the danger of *ta'tīl*, i.e., of neutralizing the attributes or "stopping their functioning as attributes."<sup>45</sup>

Allegorical interpretation is based on the principle that words have a double meaning: one that is conventionally agreed upon as signifying a thing, quality, event or state with which the audience is traditionally and universally familiar; and another that is not conventionally known or found in the lexicography of the language, but is assigned to it by the author. By so doing, the author creates a novel meaning and makes the word in question its carrier. This additional charge may be quite different from the conven-

tional one. Indeed, it may even be its opposite. It is always factitive, inseparable from the context in which it is made, and comprehensible only to its author or to the person initiated into it. Speaking, writing or interpreting allegorically is extremely dangerous because, by definition, it has no rules. Once the words of language are shaken loose from the meanings which lexicography has attached to them, nothing can stop anybody from investing them with any other meanings. *Eisegesis*, or the reading of meanings into words not lexicographically associated with them, ruins any text it attacks. It transvaluates its values, transforms its categories, and transfigures its meanings. Greek religion and civilization came to an end when the lexicographic meanings of the words of Homer were knocked out in favor of allegorical interpretation. Ideological chaos broke loose and a process of general skepticism became impossible to avert. The same was true of Hebrew scripture when Philo of Alexandria imposed upon the text a whole new layer of meanings by the same method, forcing the rabbis to cling to the letter with the strictest conservatism in order to save the faith from total ruin, and opening the gates for the Jews to grow out of their faith with good conscience. Philo's eisegetical interpretation was the very process which helped graft the new Christianist ideology onto the stump of Judaism and its scripture. The Qur'ān and especially the Islāmic doctrine of God were open to the same dangers, and had to be safeguarded. In another dimension, allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ānic attributes of God created the possibility of an abstraction process which, as in the case of Hinduism and what Tillich called "mystical monotheism," cannot be stopped until it reaches the =X, or the Absolute Void of the philosophers, and there rests in silence. Such =X can never satisfy the demand of religious consciousness for a transcendent, active, living, personal and purposive God.

Hence, Mu'tazilah doctrine was only an intermediate step in the development of Islāmic thought, and al Ash'arī rose to the task of bringing their interlude to a close. He began his career as one of their members but soon realized the dangers of their position, left their ranks and

countered their claims. The divine attributes, he said, are true as they stand in the Qur'ān, because they are the word of God about Himself, thus countering *ta'til* with the common sense meanings of the Qur'ānic terms and the faith that these words are from God. This need not lead to anthropomorphism automatically. Al Ash'arī's analysis showed that anthropomorphism derived not from the affirmation of the common sense meanings of the Qur'ānic terms, but from the attempt to give empirical answers to questions seeking "to explain how the attributes qualify God." Hence, he reasoned, if this question pertaining to the "how" of predication or attribution were avoided, anthropomorphism would be ruled out. Hence the break-through is to declare the question "how" addressed to the divine attributes uncritical and illegitimate. "The divine attributes," he argued, "are neither He nor not-He." "Neither He" negates anthropomorphism; and "nor not-He" negates *ta'til*.

*Tashbīh* (anthropomorphism) is false; and so is *ta'til* (neutralization of the attributes through allegorical interpretation of them). The former is contradictory to transcendence; the latter, to the fact of the Qur'ān's predication of the attributes to God, which is tantamount to denying the revelation itself. The solution of the dilemma, al Ash'arī reasoned, was *first*, in accepting the revealed text as it is, i.e., as one whose meaning is anchored in the lexicography of its terms; and *second*, in rejecting the question, "How the common sense meaning is predicable to the transcendent being" as illegitimate. This process, he called "*bilā kayfa*" (*without how*).

Al Ash'arī's audience understood perfectly and approved, certain that a grasp of the attribute *bilā kayfa* was not only possible, but that it was safe from the twin dangers of anthropomorphism and allegorical interpretation. The former is inevitable if the question of the how of predication of the attribute is raised in expectation of an answer similar to that analyzing the relation of predicate to subject in the empirical world. Since the subject is transcendent, the question is invalid. Underlying this principle was the realization that the lexicographic meaning of the attribute was to be maintained but only in suggestive capacity. Affirming

the divine attribute without how achieves this much. The purpose of lexicographic meaning, however, is to set the imagination on a certain course in comprehending, not to predetermine the end-object of comprehension. Lexicographic meaning gives us positive elements within the course or beam of comprehension, and it does provide walls or banks for channeling its progress so as not to be mixed up with meaning-courses other words set up. Both its inclusionary and exclusionary functions are necessary and fruitful. But once on its predetermined course, the imagination may proceed, either stopping at its end-object in nature, or continuing *ad infinitum*, under the demand of an idea of reason, in the Kantian sense of the term. The course or beam of meaning does not lead to the dark abyss, or to silence, but to something positive, though not of nature. An intuition of transcendent reality is possible precisely at the point where the imagination is "beamed" on to a course, runs on that course as far as it can until it arrives at the realization that the course is infinite and that it can sustain itself no longer. Therefore, the mind perceives the impossibility of empirical predication while the understanding is still anchored to the lexicographic meaning of the term. For the intuition of transcendent reality is an intuition of infinity gained at the very moment of consciousness when the imagination declares its own impotence to produce same. The lexicographic meaning of the term serves as anchor while the imagination soars in search of an applicable modality of the meaning in question, a modality that is *ex hypothesi* impossible to reach. Indeed, the Qur'an likens the word of God to a "tree whose roots are firm in the ground, but whose branches are infinite and unreachable in the skies above" (Qur'an 14:24).

### Expression of Divine Transcendence in the Visual Arts

Greco-Roman antiquity has known the principle of deification through idealization. By this process, the concrete (a human person or object of nature) was separated from its individual instance or concretization, for the purpose of intensifying its qualities. When these qualities had reached

the ultimate degree possible, the object was presented as that which nature ought to have produced and wished to produce, but which it failed to produce through its stammering and one thousand and one attempts. In those attempts it may have succeeded but only partially. Art is abler than nature; in that the artist can produce but always failed to do so. The work of art therefore is not an imitation of nature as Plato had charged; nor is it an empirical generalization from what is given in nature. It is *a priori*, and hence transcendent or divine, inasmuch as it is the product of an idealization process carried out to the ultimate degree.

The gods of Ancient Greece were not transcendent realities, utterly and ontologically other than nature. They were the product of the same idealization process carried out by human genius. They were human, all too human, desiring, faltering, hating, loving, plotting and counter plotting against one another, representing every facet of the human personality, every force of nature, of which they were the ultimate idealization. When the sculptor represented them in marble, or the poet in dramatic self-disclosure, any person who understood the stammering language of nature would exclaim: Yes, that is just what nature meant to say! This is naturalism and classical antiquity was the best exemplar of it. It is therefore misleading to speak of transcendence in Greco-Roman antiquity. One had better speak of immanence. Immanence requires the natural, the concrete and empirical because it is a dimension of it. It does not shun the concrete because it is an idealization of the natural; and without the natural it cannot be reached. That is also why the art of Greece and Rome is figurative; and the rendition of specific figures in art, or portraiture, is at its best.

It was in the Renaissance that Europe rediscovered the artistic legacy of antiquity and re-appropriated it after a millennium. During those one thousand years, Christendom labored under a composite, ambiguous aesthetic which combined elements of the Greek legacy with some elements of the Semitic. The result was Byzantium whose art never rose beyond that of illustration. The *forte* of Byzantine

art, namely, the icon, was unnaturalistic in form (hence Semitic, following its Judaic inheritance) and naturalistic in content by virtue of the discursive ideas it expressed in the figures or directly in the catch-words or titles assigned to the figures by the artist. This Semitic element was tossed out by the Renaissance artists who produced images of Jesus, Mary, the Father and the saints conveying the Christian meanings assigned to them, directly through the figures themselves, in the style of Ancient Greece.

Although the authorities of Christianity first condemned this naturalism as return to paganism, they were finally reconciled to it by virtue of the connection of divinity with nature implicit in the incarnation. Since then, Christendom's art has been in the main figurative and idealizational. Obviously, this was found satisfactory because transcendence in the Christian mind never made demands which figurative art could not meet.

It was otherwise with the Muslim mind which asserted an absolute transcendence of the Godhead. This could not be reconciled in any way with permissive immanence which tolerated expression of the divine in figures because God was not "other" than the natural, but its ultimate yea and idealization. The ultimate reality with which the Muslim is preoccupied, by which he is obsessed, whose will he is always seeking to discover, whose command he is always striving to obey, and whose mention is on his lips morning to evening with almost every sentence, is a transcendent reality whose essence and definition is that it is other than the whole of creation. Standing on creation's other side, such "totally other" is unrepresentable by anything in creation. Rather than give up for this very reason the whole attempt of aesthetics as the Jews have done, claiming that divine transcendence leaves no room for the visual arts, the Muslim artist accepted the visual arts and assigned to them the first task of proclaiming that nature is not an artistic medium.

Both stylization and idealization transform the natural and the concrete. But whereas idealization transforms so as to make the thing more natural, more representative of its genus, stylization transforms so as to deny the concrete as well as its genus. Stylization transforms nature

in such a way as to negate its naturalness. The stylized figure only suggests that of which it is the figure. The figure has been emptied of its content and remains a shell whose use is to express the negation. The same is true of human and animal figures, of the vine, leaf and flower throughout the arts of Islām. Their stylization is the Muslim artist's way of saying No! to nature, to its concrete instance as well as to its ideal form. That nothing in nature is a suitable vehicle or medium for artistic expression, which is the evident purpose of all figurative Islāmic art, is tantamount to the first portion of the confession of faith, namely, there is no God but God. Just as Islāmic theology has told us that nothing, absolutely nothing in nature is God, or in any way divine—all creation being creation and hence profane—so the Muslim artist, in his aesthetic profession, is telling us that nothing in nature may be an expression of divinity.

The more the Muslim artist indulged in stylization, the more it dawned on him that God's transcendence demanded more than stylization if it is to be successfully expressed in aesthetics. He discovered that the totality of nature may be denied *en bloc* if he abandoned the stylization of natural objects and reverted to the figures of geometry. These are the very opposite of nature as given to sense. Indeed they stand at the logical conclusion of the stylization process where stylization of the vine, stalk, leaf and flower reaches its ultimate end. To establish the geometrical figure as sole medium of the visual arts is a decision perfectly in accord with *Lā ilaha illā Allah*. There is in the whole of creation nothing that is Allah, or partakes of Allah or is in any way associated with Allah.

As transcendent Being, Allah is never given to sense, and can therefore never become object of a sensory intuition. To the artist whose business is to present a sensory intuition of the subject, God is an absolutely hopeless case. The Muslim conscience shudders at the very suggestion of a sensory representation of God. In this very despair of the Muslim artist came the breakthrough. Granted Allah's transcendence removes Him beyond aesthetic representation and expression, is the same true of His unrepresentableness, of His aesthetic inexpressibility? The answer is negative. God is indeed inexpressible, but His inexpress-

ibility is not. This inexpressibility became the object of aesthetic expression and the unconscious object of the Muslim artist. Stylization and its ultimate, the geometrical figure, constituted the media, the expression of God's inexpressibility constituted the goal. There remained for the Muslim artistic genius to create the design which when applied to the medium would achieve the goal.

This was accomplished before the end of the first Islāmic century, when the craftsmen were still for the most part either Christians or converts from Christianity, still committed to the art forms of Byzantium. In the Umawī palaces of Jordan, in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and the Umawī Mosque of Damascus, which date from the second half of the first Hijrī century, there is ample evidence to show that the craftsmen were Byzantine in their craftsmanship but Islāmic in some of their work. Either they, or their *maître de travail*, must have been moved by religio-aesthetic considerations other than those which moved Byzantium.

Byzantine and Roman provincial art had known both stylization and the geometrical figure. But their design was devoid of momentum. It was static. The Muslim artist developed a design in which the beholder felt compelled to move from one flower, stalk or figure to another, because the second was in process of formation (i.e., of being beheld) at the very time that the segments of the first were being brought into consciousness. In other words, the design was such that it was impossible to hold one figure in perception without including a part of the next, and to hold the full figure of the second without including a part of the third, and so forth. This gave the vision an *elan* or momentum to move ever forward away from the point at which the sight originally fell. Repetition and symmetry were then discovered to reinforce this momentum by enabling it to dispense itself in all directions. The fractional figure necessitated by the shortage of material space provided an impetus for the imagination to recreate the missing fractions beyond the material *objet d'art*. The combination of stylization, non-development, non-organicness, fractions enticing the imagination to produce their complements, symmetry and momentum generating repetition—all compelled the imagination of the attentive spectator to repro-

duce more and more figures at the same rhythm *ad infinitum*. The non-developmental, non-organic nature of the figures dictated that the production or continuation of the design in the imagination be infinite since there is no point at which it can logically terminate. The *objet d'art* thus became a field of vision arbitrarily cut out by its material boundaries from an infinite field; and, like the field of vision of a microscope, gave a precept of the infinite realm beyond it.

The realm beyond and the continuation of the pattern in it are an idea of reason pressing upon the imagination to produce it for consciousness. Certainly, under the impact of the given in the field of vision and the momentum it has generated, the imagination ably fulfills the command and begins production. If strong, that imagination will sustain itself for considerable time and in considerable space. But by nature it cannot fulfill what is expected of it, namely, the infinite continuation. Sooner or later, therefore, it must realize that its task is impossible, that its effort is hopeless. For the infinite is that which can never become object of a sensory intuition—even in the imagination. At this point, the effort of the imagination collapses and consciousness gains through the collapse an intuition of the cause of the collapse, of the impossibility of fulfilling the objective of the effort. Such intuition is an intuition of infinity, and infinity is the essential constituent of transcendence.

The *objet d'art* in Islām is esthetically, i.e., from the standpoint of beauty, the design it carries. The design has been called "Arabesque." It is the design as well as the esthetic principles on which the design is built. For arabesque is not only a decoration on a planar surface, but the principle embodied in any Islāmicized surface, in the facade of an Islāmic building, in its floor plan, in the design and color of a carpet, the illuminated page of a manuscript, the rhythmic and tonal arrangement of a piece of Islāmic music, the arrangement of flowering and/or floriated plants in a garden, of the rising and cascading fountains of aquaculture. The arabesque is called "decoration" by the orientalist art historians. As such, it is regarded as a hedonic flash of color, a monotonous repetition, an empty design to fill surfaces, or finally, a compensatory technique

to surmount the subconscious fear of the desert void. When these "savants" wax theological, they argue that Muslim genius spent itself fiddling with arabesque decoration because Islām prohibited the reproduction of figures. They have neither time nor energy to ask why did Islām prohibit figurative representation. In fact, the arabesque is no decoration at all. It is not accidental to the *objet d'art*, but its essence and core. Indeed, to cover any object with arabesque is to trans-substantiate it. So much so that the art of the arabesque, of so called "decoration," is in truth the art of trans-substantiation. Under the influence of arabesque, the *objet d'art* loses its materiality, its concreteness, its opaqueness, its individuality, the frontiers of its very being and real-existence, even if it were the heaviest, biggest and most solid building. It becomes an airlight, transparent, flying screen of design and rhythm, that serves as a launching pad or runway on which the imagination takes off on its flight—a flight which ends in catastrophe for the imagination but the greatest and deepest sensing of the transcendent possible for man.

### The Expression of Transcendence in Belles-Lettres

The question may now be asked, whence did the Muslims obtain direction for such a great breakthrough in the expression of transcendent reality? Was this development of theirs in the visual arts a pure accident of genius? How did the discovery of the arabesque accord with the values of Islām in other realms? If the arabesque became the dominant principle of textile, metal, glass, leather and woodwork, of architecture, horticulture and aquaculture, of manuscript illustration and illumination, even of music and chanting, surely its roots must run far deeper into the tradition that its discovery in the visual arts has suggested. Where are these roots and what is their source?

All these questions find their ultimate answer in the phenomenon of the Qur'ān, the revelation which rested the whole of its claim to divine origin on its absolute realization of the literary sublime. Conscious of its sublime quality, the Qur'ān challenged its audience to produce a

match for it (Qur'ān 10:38; 28:49); conscious of the impotence of its audience to do so, it lowered the challenge to ten sūrahs or chapters (Qur'ān 11:13), then to one chapter (Qur'ān 2:23), then to a few verses (Qur'ān 52:33). Towering proudly high above them it taunted them further by declaring their impotence even if mankind and jinn were to mobilize themselves for the task in one solid row (Qur'ān 17:88). Islām's enemies commissioned the ablest among them to rise to the challenge, but they were the first to denounce the contenders as failures when they presented their productions for judgment.

Long before the Prophet, the Arabs had already perfected the literary art and achieved their greatest distinctions in it. Their ability to produce works of great literary merit was tested, and the esteem they accorded to such great works was without parallel in any other culture. History knows of no other people with whom the word and its beauty had equal importance. To the Arabs, the word was a matter of life and death, of oblivion and eternity, of war and peace, of virtue and vice, of nobility and vulgarity.

"*Ijāz*" is the name given to the phenomenon of the Qur'ān's challenge to all men at all times, but especially to the Arab contemporaries of the Prophet, to produce a work matching it in beauty and excellence. It contains two elements: The first is the innate character of the Qur'ān which, when perceived by the mind capable of perceiving it, produces the feeling of fascination, of being moved, of experiencing the highest and most intense values, in short, of encountering ultimate reality with all the experiences attendant upon such encounter. The second is the realization of the difference that separates man, the perceiver, from God, the perceived, an index of which is man's incapacity to produce anything like the Qur'ān. The former is innate to the Qur'ān; the latter, to man. The Arabs refer to the second simply as *ijāz*, the phenomenon or event of miraculousness; but refer to the first as *wujūh al ijāz* or aspects of miraculousness of the Qur'ān.

That *ijāz*, as event, has taken place among the believing and non-believing Arabs during the life of Muhammad, as well as among the Muslims of all ages, is an undeniable

fact of history. The Qur'ān's challenge to the unbelievers and their failure to meet the challenge has been recorded in the Qur'ān with relish (*taqrī*). *Ijāz*, however, is not only an event of history. The Qur'ān's challenge is timeless and so is its success. The proof of this is the Qur'ān's continuing power to convert men to Islām, to convince them immediately of its divine origin. No man who reads what the Muslims wrote concerning their experience with Qur'ān, or who observes the Qur'ān's effects upon their consciousness, their lives and thoughts can avoid the conclusion that the Qur'ān has such character.

The Qur'ān alone was regarded by the Arabs as worthy enough to be divine. Theirs was a connoisseur judgment—accepted by the learned, friend or foe alike—which was passed on the Qur'ānic quality deeming it worthy of the transcendent God and expressing His will. Unlike the earlier prophets, whose prophethood and revelations were established through breaches of the laws of nature—i.e., by overwhelming the epistemic powers of human consciousness—the Qur'ān presented its “miracle” to those very powers capable of grasping it, and invited them to consider and acknowledge its miraculousness, or divine origin, deliberately. Its appeal was to the faculty or intellection. Whereas the other revelations “coerced” consciousness with their breaches of natural law, the Qur'ān convinced by its fulfillment of the highest expectations of the intellect. That is why the Qur'ān's miraculousness became subject of the deepest and most extensive study and analysis. A physical miracle such as Moses or Jesus brought simply overwhelmed its spectators. Such miracle was by nature beyond understanding, and beyond discussion.

Evidently, there must be to the Qur'ān one or more constitutive qualities which, if perceived by the capable are indicative of transcendence. Muslims set themselves to the task of identifying and analyzing these qualities.

The first element is the non-developmental nature of Qur'ānic prose. This is the quality which baffles all Western readers, for the Qur'ān has neither beginning nor end. The arrangement of its surahs or chapters is neither chronological, nor systematic. When a Muslim wishes to

recite the Qur'ān, he reads *mā tayassara*, i.e., that part of the text which "easily comes his way." He may begin reading with any verse he wishes, and he may stop at any other verse. Whatever his choice, the recitation is always perfect. Whether the reader is Muslim, Christian, Jew, Hindu or Buddhist, atheist or agnostic, if he is a man of knowledge in Arabic, the recitation is always sublime. The beginning is always as sweet and perfect as the middle or the end. This non-developmental character makes of the Qur'ānic text a field of vision which God cut out from His infinite will. To know it is to perceive it as such, i.e., as vehicle for reaching the infinite realm of which it is the expression. For only the supernatural, or divine, is as good in any or every part as it is in its infinite totality.

This aspect of the literary sublime in Islām, *viz.*, non-development, is both ubiquitous and necessary. Drama, the opposite of non-development is utterly ruled out because it is, in its ideal form, the expression of polytheist concrete natural divinity. Non-development characterized Arabic poetry and prose from their origins to the present century. The best Arabic poetry is that which reads beautifully, forwards or backwards, because every one of its verses is complete, autonomous and beautiful in and by itself.

The second aspect of the Qur'ān's miraculousness is momentum. It is analyzable into a literary factor and a musical factor, which work together and reinforce each other. The more one reads, the more one desires to read. Every passage recited generates within the reader and the audience a movement of his imagination to continue the recitation *ad infinitum*. Every passage is a launching pad or runway from which the imagination flies into the infinite space whose perception is induced by the passage in question. No creation of new verses is involved but re-creation in the imagination aided by memory of verses already recited. The same process occurs when the capable gather in *mushā'arah*, or poetry-recitation session, at which the participant recites poetry of the same meter and rhyme as the one that preceded. Sometimes, the poetry recited is classical and known to all; sometimes it is composed extemporaneously for that occasion. In either case,

the recitations are so beautiful and so moving that they arouse the appreciative audience to indulge in extemporary poetical composition observing the same meter, rhyme and modalities. What is phenomenal in such events is that they are commonplace, not only among the Arabic speaking peoples, but equally among the Persian, the Urdu, Turkish and Malay speaking peoples whose poetical and esthetic consciousness has been moulded by Islām.

The third aspect is *balāghah*, or eloquence, at the apex of which comes *badī* or the literary sublime. This aspect is a function of the beauty of composition, of the artistry of the flow, of the exact fitness of the terms, the finesse of the rendering. On one hand, the terms and phrases, the figures of speech, the percepts they evoke, and the composition of all these together into a finished sequence; and, on the other hand, the things, events or states they designate, the meanings they convey—all these are infinite in number, variety and relation. And yet, there is one and only one rendering of them that fits *muqtadā al hāl* (the reality sought). It is to the extent or degree that this ideal is achieved in a composition, that the composition is said to have actualized a measure of *balāghah*. When this measure is at its highest, the passage is recognized as *badī*. It is this ideal which the Qur'ān has realized in every verse. Every change of it is a change to the worse. Some rare geniuses have achieved a little measure of this superlative quality, but only in their description of one kind of reality in which their genius specialized. The Arabs have recognized Imru'ul Qays as approximating that category but only when he rides to war; al Nābighah al Dhubyānī, but only when he expresses fear; Zuhayr ibn Abī Salmā, but only when he expresses desire. The Qur'ān has fulfilled the same sublime norms in every subject it touched. Every word in the verse is a jewel; and so is every verse in the sūrah. The Qur'ān has no metal in which a few jewels are set to make jewelry. It is all jewels!

The compositional *badī* or the Qur'ān is combined with the ideational *badī*, i.e., the highest, noblest religious, ethical, social and personal thought, to make one indivisible unity. In the Qur'ān, the form is sublime; the content is

sublime; and both form and content are interlocked with each other so that their separation is impossible without destruction of the sublime nature of the whole. In the sublime quality peculiar to it, none is available without the other. The result of their combination in the Qur'ān is irresistible fascination and terror. No literary composition in human history has ever moved so deeply, so violently, so permanently, so many generations of men and women as the Qur'ān has done. None has shattered and/or reconstructed so many lives! Even the Presbyterian H.A.R. Gibb said he felt the earth shaking under his feet as he recited the surah entitled "The Earthquake." The sublime in the Qur'ān is not static, but dynamic. None can resist its fascination, its terror or its intoxication.

The whole *ijāz* claim of the Qur'ān would be idle if its power over the minds and hearts of men was dulling, dilating or hypnotizing consciousness in the sense of overwhelming it by reducing its power of perception, its noetic power. The very opposite is the case. The Qur'ān heightens consciousness and enhances it to exert the utmost perceptive, rational, intellectual, empirical, critical power of which it is capable. Its work is carried out under the full light of the sun, as it were, at mid-day, and with unsurpassable realism.

We have seen that the divine attributes are not to be interpreted allegorically; that they must be affirmed as they stand, *bilā kayfa*, without permitting any anthropomorphism. The same applies to the Qur'ān as a whole of which the attributes are only a part. If it evokes intuition of the transcendent without anthropomorphism, and yet without allegorical interpretation, it does so by its *ijāz* quality. The language of the Qur'ān moves by evoking poetical figures like any poetry. But unlike human poetry, the Qur'ān moves by its form and content both of which bespeak transcendence together. The former does so by the esthetic categories of non-development, momentum and *balāghah*; the latter, by conveying a content that is itself transcendent, hence infinite, absolute, *sui generis*, and moving. In its presence, man loses his ontological poise and equilibrium; for he has, if he understands it, established contact with

the source of all being, of all motion, with the transcendent *tremendum et fascinosum*. The intuition of the transcendent through belles-lettres is not merely contemplative, but dynamic. For the transcendent reality the belles-lettres point to is normative, appealing, moving, commanding and prohibiting. It was under the impact of the transcendent expressed in the literary sublime that Semitic consciousness saw itself as the carrier of divine mission, as the vortex of human history, and the fulfillment of destiny.

### Safeguarding Belles-Lettres Revelation From Changing Language and Culture

The total preservation of the Arabic language with all the categories of understanding imbedded therein and its continuous use by the millions to the present day, eliminated most of the hermeneutical problems confronting the modern reader of the fourteen-centuries-old revelation. The application of Qur'anic directives to the everchanging affairs of life will always be new; and so would the translation of its general principles into concrete prescriptive legislations speaking to contemporary tasks and problems. This, Islāmic jurisprudence has always recognized. But the meaning of the terms of revelation, the categories under which those meanings are to be understood, are certainly realizable today exactly as they were for the Prophet and his contemporaries fourteen centuries ago. The latter, not the former, is the problem of expressing transcendence. Understanding the meanings of the Qur'an as the Prophet understood them is the assumption of the application, or misapplication, of those meanings to contemporary problems.

The capacity of any student to understand the revelation today exactly as it was understood on the day it was revealed, is indeed a "miracle" of the history of ideas. It cannot be explained by the distinction of "disclosive" and "creative" functions of language. The former suggests an esoteric level of meaning which is disclosed to the initiates only, and by means of eisegesis; and the latter, a fabricative role whose product is not distinguishable from the constructs of pure fiction. Moreover, the "creative" function is not immune against the charges of relativism and subjec-

tivism which render impossible any claims on behalf of Islām or any religion as such, and treats all claims as personal and dated. The interreligious dialogue offers little reward if all it can purport itself to be is a dialogue between persons, not religions.

That language changes so that it is never the same is not necessary. Arabic has not changed, though its repertory of root words has expanded a little to meet new developments. The essence of the language, which is its grammatical structure, its conjugation of verbs and nouns, its categories for relating facts and ideas, and the forms of its literary beauty—has not changed at all. The Heraclitean claim that everything changes and is never the same is a fallacy, because there must be something permanent if change is to be change at all and not the sceptic's "stream of the manifold." Far more safe and accurate in the definition of language were the Muslim linguists who recognized in language one and only one function, namely, the purely descriptive. Characteristically, they defined eloquence as "descriptive precision." The terrain of lexicography thus became for them sacrosanct—"God Himself taught Adam the names of things" (2:31); and they laboriously produced for the Arabic language of the Qur'an the most complete lexicographic dictionaries of any language. Creativity, they relegated to the human mind, where it properly belongs, as the capacity to discover and place under the full light of consciousness, aspects of reality which escape the less creative or capable, but which genius captures. The more precise the description of such apprehended reality, the more eloquent and beautiful it is, as well as the more didactic and instructive. Language—in this case Arabic—thus remained an ordered and public discipline, open to inspection, capable of accurate judgment, and compelling whoever has the requisite intelligence to say to the good author or critic, "Yes! That's just it!" It was natural that the Islāmic revelation would do all this. For without it, considering the transformations the revelations of Moses, Zoroaster, the Buddha and Jesus had gone through as their original languages were lost, forgotten, or "changed," the transcendent God Himself would be a poor student of the history of religions!

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), Chap. II, pp. 24-35; James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1961), p. 20, 23-24.

<sup>3</sup>Alan H. Gardiner, "Hymns to Amon from a Leiden Papyrus," *Zietschrift fur aegyptische sprache*, XL22 (1905), p. 25, quoted in H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>4</sup>Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, pp. 60-72.

<sup>5</sup>He Marduk "verily is the God, the creator of everything... the commands of his mouth we have exalted above the gods... Verily he is the lord of all the gods of heaven and earth; the king at whose instruction the gods above and below shall be afraid... shall quake and tremble in their dwellings... verily he is the light of the gods, the mighty prince... It is he who restored all the ruined gods as though they were his own creation, restored the dead gods to life" (Pritchard, pp. 69-70).

<sup>6</sup>Martin Buber rightly claims the Hebrew spirit of separate identity is patriarchal and not, as Freud had contended, a product of the the Exodus event. See his *Moses and Monotheism*, tr. K. Jones (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1939).

<sup>7</sup>John Bright, *A History of Israel* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1960), p. 336.

<sup>8</sup>Pritchard, pp. 57-58.

<sup>9</sup>A number of statements attributed to Jesus by the evangelists

contradict this conclusion. But it is not difficult to show that such statements run counter to Jesus' personality and must have therefore been additions made by the evangelists in satisfaction of tensions to which they or their churches were exposed. Such are the statements which declare Jesus' ministry directed to the Jews exclusively (Matthew 5:17-19; 7:6; 8:31; 15:27; Mark 5:12; 7:28; Luke 16:17, 21) and even to the lost among them (e.g., Mark 10:6; 15:24; Luke 15:4, 6); those which make Jesus' message subservient to Jewish legalism ("Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled"—Matthew 5:19; those which make Jesus subscribe to Jewish ethnocentrism such as "this day is salvation come to this house [of Zacchaeus] for in as much as he also is a son of Abraham"—Luke 19:9.)

<sup>10</sup>F.J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The beginnings of Christianity* (London, 1920), Part I, Vol. I. p. 398.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 403.

<sup>12</sup>A.E.J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ* (London: Longman's, 1926), pp. 236-237.

<sup>13</sup>Mark 14:58. This need not preclude the possibility of God performing another miracle—besides resurrecting the dead, healing the sick and restoring sight to the blind which Jesus performed by God's power in vindication of his prophethood—this time to rebuild the material temple in three days.

<sup>14</sup>"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."

<sup>15</sup>"We believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all the ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things were made . . ." (Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (London): Oxford University Press, 1943), pp. 36-37.

<sup>16</sup>Bettenson, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup>Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I.v., quoted in Bettenson, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup>Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, I, xxiv. 1,2, as quoted in Bettenson, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>19</sup>Irenaeus, *op. cit.*, I, xxiv. 3-5, quoted in Bettenson, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>20</sup>Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1951), pp. 142-143.

<sup>21</sup>*Metamorphoses*, xi. 19ff, quoted by M.J. Vermaseren, "Hellenistic Religions," in C. Jones Bleeker and George Widengren, *Historia Religionum* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), Vol. I. p. 522-523.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>See for substantiating details Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* (London: 1907).

<sup>24</sup>"May you die as he dies; and may you live as he lives."

<sup>25</sup>Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man to our image and likeness" proves, for St. Augustine, that in God there is plurality, and humanness. For, he argues, unless the 'us' refers to the trinity, God would have used the singular form; and, unless the likeness of man i.e., human-ness, was in Him, He could not have created man in His likeness." (*De Trinitate*, in *The Fathers of the Church*, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963, Vol. 45, p. 20). In Proverbs 8:24 we read: "Before the mountains were settled into place... I was brought forth"; and in Proverbs 8:22: "the Lord begot me, the first born of his ways." With such phrases a gnostic Semitic mind sang the eternity of wisdom allowing it to speak in the first person form. Our author took them to refer to Jesus, whom he gnostically identified with the Word, Wisdom, or logos. But in order to justify the Christian notion of Jesus as creaturely person as well as God, he assigned to the two statements the desired disparate meanings respectively (*De Trinitate*, p. 36). Adam's reply to God following his disobedience reported in Genesis 3:8 should also be noted: "I heard your voice, and I hid myself from your face since I am naked." This passage constitutes evidence that "God, the Father... appeared... through a changeable and visible creature subject to Himself," and hence establishes that the divine substance can be incarnated into a human (Ibid., p. 71). The subjunctive form of the divine commandment "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3) indicates for Augustine that there was another person whom God must have been addressing. Evidently, his mind is incapable of conceiving a creative act of God preceded by a divine pronouncement expressive of a divine wish. And since he has "established" that the interlocutor is a being with two natures, one of which is human and has a "face," he returns to Genesis 3:8 to assert that the "face" Adam was hiding from was that of Jesus Christ (Ibid., pp. 71-72). The grammatical

turbulence of Genesis 18 was arbitrarily interpreted by the rabbis as referring once to God and once to three angels sent by Him ("One to announce the tidings of the birth of Isaac; the second to destroy Sodom; and the third to rescue Lot. 'An angel is never sent on more than one errand at a time'—Midrash" (*Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, London: Soncino Press, 1958, p. 63, note 2) is taken by Augustine as evidence for the trinity. "Since three men were seen, and no one of them is said to be greater than the others in form, or in age, or in power, why do we not believe," asks Augustine rhetorically, "that the equality of the Trinity is intimated here by the visible creature, and the one and same substance in the three persons? What does he mean by saying to them: 'No, my Lord,' and not, 'No, my Lords...?' (Ibid., pp. 75-77). Finally, Augustine performs a repulsive *tour de force* with Exodus 33:23. In answer to Moses' request that he be permitted to see God's face, God promises to cover Moses when He passes so that he may not see God, and later to uncover him after He passes "and then you shall see my back parts..." the "back parts" or "*posteriora*," Augustine claims, "are commonly and not without reason understood to prefigure the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the back parts are taken to be His flesh, in which He was born of the Virgin and rose again" (Ibid., pp. 84-85).

<sup>26</sup>*Against Praxeas*, xii-xiii, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, pp. 607 ff.

<sup>27</sup>*Church Dogmatics*, tr. G.W. Bromley and T.F. Torrence (London: T. and T. Clark, 1960), III, Part 1, pp. 191 ff.

<sup>28</sup>Carl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, p. 195.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), Vol. I, p. 226.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 225-226.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-81; 91-92.

<sup>39</sup>Charles P. Price, *The Principles of Christian Faith and Practice* (New Delhi: Islām and the Modern Age Society, 1977), pp. 72-73.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>T. R. Miles, *Religion and the Scientific Outlook* (London: Allen and Unwin), pp. 161-164, qoted in Price, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>42</sup>The most famous and complete version is that prepared by Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185 A.C.) in Andalus. For a translation, see M. Mahdi and M. Lerner, *Sourcebook of Medieval Political Philosophy*.

<sup>43</sup>Ibn Hisham reports in his *Sirah Rasul Allah* (Life of the Prophet of God) Heraclius's answer as follows: "Alas, I know that your master is a prophet sent by God... But I go in fear of my life from the Romans; but for that I would follow him..." tr. by A. Guillaume (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955). p. 656.

<sup>44</sup>Al Shahristani, *Al Milal wa al Nihal* (Cairo: Matba at al Azhar, 1370/1951), pp. 171-179.

<sup>45</sup>Hence, their name "al Mu'attilah," "the neutralizers." Al Shahristani, pp. 61-63.

## VIII

### MEDICAL ETHICS—TODAY'S OPTIONS

by Dr. Felix Fernando

Prior to World War II, medical ethics was a relatively static discipline with a very restricted field of inquiry. Being concerned, as it was, largely with the niceties of professional conduct by doctors towards their patients (doctor-patient relationships) and the maintenance of cordial relations between doctors themselves (medical etiquette), there was hardly anything in this area to commend its study to anyone outside the profession. The ethical code for doctors had been laid down ages ago by Hippocrates, and despite modernized versions such as the Declaration of Geneva adopted by the World Health Organization in 1948, there was really nothing much which could be usefully added to the principles already spelled out by the sage of Cos. Controversial issues were few, and although debates erupted from time to time on topics like vivisection and vaccination, viewed retrospectively, it is clear that what sustained such controversies was the debating skill of the participants (who included celebrities like George Bernard Shaw and Oliver Wendell Holmes) rather than any abiding interest in the public mind or among doctors themselves about the merits or demerits of the moral choices involved. Religious convictions of one sort or another wielded some influence of the issues debated. But, by in large, always do the right thing by their patients, and indeed apart from occasional lapses, this appeared to be the case.

Against this peaceful backdrop, the changes which

took place in the scenario of medical ethics during and after World War II can only be described as revolutionary in character. A veritable avalanche of new discoveries and highly refined techniques in biology and medicine has made both medical care and research enormously sophisticated areas of activity where ethical choices of a very novel kind are moving more and more to the forefront and presenting levels of complexity which are becoming increasingly difficult to unravel. These problems are posing a challenge not only to medical doctors and research scientists, but even to the ordinary layman who when everything is said and done will be at the receiving end of the new technologies. Religion too must necessarily take note of the ethical issues raised by these innovations if it is to remain meaningful in any real sense to people caught up in the vortex of such changes.

We are living today in an age where it is possible—this is just a simple example—for a child to be conceived outside the womb of its mother with the help of artificial insemination from a father who may have died many years ago. Eventualities such as this may at first sight appear to be a matter of relative indifference to society at large. But on closer scrutiny there are many issues which are seen to surface. Would such a child, for instance, be legally entitled to inherit the wealth of his putative father, and what would be the status of such inheritance in the event of subsequent claims on the estate being made by siblings having the same paternity? If no such claims are admissible, will we have to abandon our present notions of "responsible parenthood?" I am not suggesting, of course, that legal conundrums like this should weigh for a moment against the needs of a childless couple who genuinely desire to have a child. But what if the procedure be adopted as a strategy for national eugenics to produce a nation of supermen which after all is a very natural human aspiration. One cannot forget here the Ordensburg experiment of Adolf Hitler where S.S. men of supposedly Aryan appearance were encouraged to mate with equally Aryan looking maidens for this purpose. Today it does not require a dictator to think up such a plan; the use of genetic

engineering for precisely this purpose is being openly advocated as part of the humanist credo to our times.

## IX THE COSMIC COVENANT

by Henry O. Thompson

The religions of the world are sometimes known more for their parochialism than their universalism. In a day when the world has become a "global village," it is worth looking again at the universal elements. Perhaps the religions, or religion, has more to say to humanity at large than is usually acknowledged.

One of the religious traditions is known as the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. A major feature of this tradition is the covenant and from the beginning, in time as in the beginning of the Bible, the covenant has applied to all humanity. Indeed, it applies to the whole world, to the entire universe. The Hebrew scripture tells us that God saw his creation as good. He created human beings and blessed them. The Greek scripture, called the New Testament, tells us "God so loved the world... ."

In this "cosmic covenant" we find concerns that appear in other traditions as well, such as a reverence for life, concern for harmony with nature, and an ethical tradition that considers both behavior and motivation. On this common ground, people standing in this Near Eastern tradition can relate to both Western and Eastern traditions. The following study is shared with this thought in mind.

A preliminary discussion is concerned with showing that the concept of creation was present in Hebraic thought from very early in that tradition. It is not something that

has been tacked on at a later time. At the same time, it must be noted that the Creator concept is not common to all religious traditions. There are both similarities and dissimilarities. A universal concern is not intended to imply uniformity. The uniqueness of peoples and traditions can be respected even as we share a solid foundation of mutual love and respect for the welfare of all peoples, and indeed for all of life, and indeed for our entire world, so heavily threatened today by the prospects for nuclear destruction, as well as the quieter kinds of pollution that destroy water and forest, life and air.

The "Cosmic Covenant," is found in the Bible, in the book of Genesis, chapters 1-11. The term is used by Aldos Tos.<sup>1</sup> These chapters are concerned with the whole world, the entire "cosmos," the universe and everything in it. The word for covenant, "berith," does not appear in this section until Gen. 6:18, where God tells Noah to build the ark in preparation for the flood, "and I will establish my covenant with you."

While the word does not appear earlier, the idea or concept is there, from the beginning, with the stories of creation. Edmund Jacob says the creation is more than the context in which the covenant is unfolded. Creation is already a prefiguring of that covenant.<sup>2</sup> Before considering the concept of covenant, however, it is helpful to look at the whole concept of creation in ancient Israel. Eichrodt notes that God's creation of the world is an immemorial belief in Israel. That can no longer be disputed despite the fact that for years it has been customary to doubt it.<sup>3</sup> Others, however, insist that Israel had no concept of creation—or at least no doctrinal concern with it until a fairly late period, c. 500 B.C.<sup>4</sup>

It has been suggested also that Israel did not really begin until the covenant at Sinai which Moses mediated between God and the people. This covenant is a basic concern for another time. Here we can note the thought of Gerhard von Rad, that Israelite religion developed backwards from the Sinai covenant. The covenant as we find it in the book of Genesis is an extension or retrojection back into the past, of the covenant idea as established at Sinai.

To understand the book of Genesis according to this view, we must start with Moses then work back into the Patriarchal period of Gen. 12-50, and the Primeval History or "Urgeschichte" of Gen. 1-11.

I would suggest that while Genesis may not have been written down until much later than even Moses, the people who put the biblical material in the order in which we now find it, knew what they were doing. Creation comes first for the obvious reason that it comes first. The peoples of the ancient Near East had some understanding of creation as far back as 3000 B.C. and probably earlier. Whether you start the Hebrew people with Abraham or Moses or even David, they began in a cultural milieu which already had creation concepts over a thousand years old. To suggest that the Israelites did not develop any such concept or concern until 500 B.C. seems a bit unreasonable.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the second part of the book of Isaiah speaks of a "New Creation." This portion of the text is commonly dated to c. 540 B.C.<sup>6</sup>

Before there could be a concept of a new creation in 540 B.C., there must surely have been an *old* concept of creation. Anderson goes on to say, "Nevertheless, it is a striking fact that in the early period of Israel's history the creation faith did not have the prominence that was given it in later times." He explains this by the historical character of Israel's faith. It was not tied to nature and the seasons of the year.<sup>7</sup> It did not emphasize the natural world of creation. His point depends on how one takes the terms "early" and "prominence."

The widely accepted and widely debated Graf-Wellhausen theory claims that the first five books of the Bible, the Torah or Pentateuch, is a compilation of at least four earlier documents. Just as a modern writer pulls together an article from a variety of sources, so the editor(s) of the biblical material put together earlier materials. The classic formulation of this doctrine over the past 100 years, is that there were four main documents. The "J" or Yahwist document is dated c. 950 B.C. The "E" or Elohist is dated c. 750 B.C. "D" or Deuteronomy dates to c. 650 B.C. "P" or the Priestly document comes from c. 550 B.C. There is little

or no "D" material in the tetrateuch, the first four books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. These are a conflation of J, E, and P.<sup>8</sup>

There are at least four creation concepts in the Old Testament.<sup>9</sup> The first two are Gen. 1:1-2:4a, and Gen. 2:4b-25. Proverbs 8 describes Wisdom as the master worker in creation. Scattered throughout the Psalms and prophets are references to the ancient Mesopotamian creation stories. These tell of the world being created out of the body of a slain dragon named Tiamat. We find references to this concept in Job 9:13; 26:12; Ps. 46; 89:9-12; 74:12-17; Isaiah 27:1; 51:9-10. While the writing of the Psalms and prophets in their present form date to a later period, the period to which Anderson refers, the idea of creation from a dragon or sea monster goes back to the third millennium B.C. Gen. 14 lies outside the J, E, P formula and is of uncertain date. It is probably an ancient tradition.<sup>10</sup> Verses 19 and 22 describe God as "Maker of Heaven and Earth." This is surely a creator concept and while we may not be able to determine the date as accurately as we might like, it is at least older than the late period.

The creation story of Gen. 2:4b-25 is supposed to be part of the Yahwist document of c. 950 B.C., the time of David and Solomon and their empire. This is earlier than the "late period." In addition, while the story may have late interpretations or additions, it is not likely that the Yahwist "made it up" out of his imagination. He was drawing on earlier sources, perhaps in the form of oral tradition. How far back we can go with the oral tradition is heavily disputed but it is at least earlier than the late period. One clue to the date of oral tradition is the situation in life ("sitz im leben") reflected in the story. When laws presumably given by Moses at Mt. Sinai reflect the agricultural situation of Palestine hundreds of years later, one can relate the law to that later period. Here in Gen. 2, the dry creation suggests desert or arid conditions in the mind of the writer or the people for whom the oral tradition was alive and part of their repertoire. There are no fish in the story. While arguments from silence are notoriously nonconclusive, this at least supports a desert context.<sup>11</sup> This could

point to Palestine itself or to the nomadic period of the pre-conquest Israelites, either under Moses and Joshua or earlier with the Patriarchs.

In this same time frame of the Yahwist writer, G. Ernest Wright suggested that the creation theme was used by theologians of Jerusalem's Davidic dynasty and the Wisdom school as well as in Israel's national epic, that of the J writer. The Wisdom tradition was traditionally started by Solomon and includes Prov. 8. The Davidic covenant promised David a house, a dynasty, that would last forever. David's house is as firmly established as God's creation.<sup>12</sup> A related concern appears in this time of the monarchy in Solomon's temple. John L. McKenzie notes that the pillars, Yakin or Jakin and Boaz, and the bronze water vessel called "the sea," are symbols of Yahweh's cosmic domain. The pillars of the world and Yahweh's control of the sea (Ps. 104:9; Job 26:10) are the most obvious implications. The antiquity of the ideas here may be reflected in the ancient Near Eastern creation stories which climax in the building of the temple.<sup>13</sup>

The "P" document or the priestly narrative of Gen 1, is commonly dated to c. 550 B.C. Literarily it is composed of two strands woven together. These two sources could in themselves suggest a yet earlier tradition.<sup>14</sup> The oral tradition may be appealed to for a yet older date for the contents of the story. The wet creation does not help much with its "sitz im Leben," however. The annual flood of the Nile River could give such a description as:

Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear. Gen. 1:9

If the priestly writers were in Mesopotamia c. 550 B.C. as per the usual interpretation, they could have found the context in the floods of the area or in the traditions of a Great Flood in ancient times according to Mesopotamian tradition. Gen 1:2 says, "darkness was on the face of the deep." The Hebrew word here is "tehom," a cognate of "tiamat," the name of the ancient dragon who was killed and whose carcass formed the heavens and the earth.<sup>15</sup> This terminology could suggest that the priestly document

contains material that is very ancient indeed. It may have been in the Hebrew tradition from the days of the Patriarchal origins in Mesopotamia though fragments of the story have been found in Palestine, in the excavations at Megiddo. "P" is sometimes thought of as being or giving the framework of the book of Genesis or even of the entire Pentateuch. Hermann Gunkel thought of "P" as the "product of a great and universal mind, the beginning of a universal history in the grand style."<sup>16</sup>

McKenzie notes some recent critics are inclined to see in Gen. 1 an earlier recital which is preserved by P. If it was, McKenzie suggests a pre-exilic New Year's festival. He associated this with the temple of Solomon and feels it was a covenant renewal ceremony with roots in the Israelite tribal covenant, the amphictyony, from the days of the Judges. The covenant itself became a celebration of Yahweh's sovereignty celebrated in creation.<sup>17</sup>

Outside of the usual creation narratives or references, we might note also the idea of God as controlling the heavenly bodies or the universe. These suggest that God is either the Creator or a universal God of great power.<sup>18</sup> One example of this is in the Song of Deborah in Judges 5. Even by the standards of literary criticism, this is a very early poem. It may have been by an eye-witness, c. 1125-1100 B.C.

Lord, when thou didst go forth from Seir, when thou didst march from the region of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped yea, the clouds dropped water. The mountains quaked before the Lord, yon Sinai before the Lord, the God of Israel. (Judges 5:4-5)

From heaven fought the stars, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The torrent Kishon swept them away, the onrushing torrent, the torrent Kishon. (Judges 5:19b-21a)

The Song of Miriam is also seen as old by literary standards. Here too we have a belief in God's control over the elements.

At the blast of thy nostrils the waters piled up, the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed

in the heart of the sea." (Exodus 15:8) "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. (Exodus 15:10)

This conception of God's control or effect on the natural also appears in Isaiah 17:12-14; Jeremiah 5:22; Nahum 1:4; I Kings 8:12; Psalm 104; Job 38.

From another source comes yet another line of thought. Archaeological data has shown that the Hebrew Patriarchs "fit" into the Middle Bronze Age, c. 2000-1550 B.C. In other words, while the Wellhausen theory suggests the materials of Gen. 12-50 were written down later, c. 950, 750, and 500 B.C. (J-E-P), the contents are at least relatively accurate from a thousand years earlier. The names, places, living conditions, customs, laws, etc., found in Gen. 12-50, accurately reflect the Middle Bronze Age.<sup>19</sup>

The accuracy of many details has not been established. The accuracy of Gen. 12-50 does not establish the accuracy of Gen. 1-11. But the accuracy of Gen. 12-50 does suggest that the content of J-E-P is much older than the date of writing, and far more accurate than the Wellhausen date of writing would suggest. To continue to suggest that the content to J-E-P is based solely or exclusively on the date of the writing is simply wrong.

It is not impossible that the Patriarchal material was preserved in writing and the writing is now lost. More commonly, the preservation has been assumed to have been through oral tradition. The age of oral tradition as noted earlier may be difficult if not impossible to determine. Miriam's song refers to Philistia, Moab and Edom. One could suggest this reflects a post-conquest period, a period after which the poem developed, at least in its present form. The assumption is that the Israelites would not have known about these three peoples prior to contact with them in or on their way to the land of Canaan. At other times, the age of oral tradition is quite indefinite. It is also worth noting that oral tradition may have existed side by side with written materials. It is not impossible that all four documents were drawing on equally old material. The Graf-Wellhausen theory drew the unnecessary conclusion that the documents reflected only the time in which

they were written. The retention of both written and oral forms of the traditions could mean that both the time of writing *and* the earlier times are represented in the biblical material as we now have it. Anderson represents this with a chart showing the written material in solid lines and the oral tradition in dotted lines.<sup>20</sup> The study of Arabic materials shows that both written and oral forms existed side by side in pre-Islamic Arabia.<sup>21</sup> While not as prominent in modern culture, it is common in the form of jokes, anecdotes, and various stories that are part of oral tradition but which can also be found in written form. This is especially common in living traditions. In United Methodism, there are quotations and stories about John Wesley, some of which are quite variant in form, which circulate in both oral and written traditions.

The point of this concern is that the date of writing does not determine the age of the contents of the writing. The date of the contents must be determined on other grounds, such as the historical allusions, accuracy, the use of terminology appropriate to the age in question, etc. My concern here is not the dating of literary materials, per se, but to be aware that materials vary in date. The suggestion on the date of Israel's interest in the creation motif needs to be taken with this awareness in mind.

The concern with the prominence of the creation motif also needs a bit of caution. If we were to insist that the priestly creation narrative shows a late concern with creation, logically it would follow that the priestly discussion of the exodus and all other material in the "P" document is also of late interest. This *has* been concluded by some, or at least it has been held that all or most of the biblical material was written down in the post-exilic period. This implies that *none* of the pre-exilic themes were prominent until the exilic or post-exilic period from c. 550-400 B.C. or later.<sup>22</sup> Alternately, one could say they were all equally prominent, or, that some were more equal than others. I would suggest that the Hebrew writers consciously and deliberately began their story with creation.

The story of Creation fitly stands on the opening pages of the Bible, for it is fundamental to all

the subsequent history as the Hebrews conceived it.<sup>23</sup>

### THE COVENANT IN CREATION

Anderson, analyzing Genesis and Exodus, suggests that the "P" document or the priestly writing, divides history into a series of "dispensations."<sup>24</sup> The first of these is Creation, or rather the era from creation to Noah. The second is the covenant with Noah, the Noachian covenant where the word "berith" is first used. The third dispensation is the covenant with Abraham, and the last is the covenant at Mt. Sinai. The first dispensation then, is on the order of a covenant, even though the term "berith" is not used there. Indeed, "creation is the foundation of the covenant; it provides the setting within which Yahweh's saving work takes place."<sup>25</sup>

The *Divine Principle*<sup>26</sup> of Unification theology divides history into dispensations. Adam-Noah-Abraham is one set. The Patriarchal period is subdivided further. This age old method of dividing history may or may not be acceptable to modern historians.<sup>27</sup> Hillers notes that P's outline of history was accepted by all Christendom until recently. In fairness, he says, it might be seen as so influential because it is reasonable, plausible, credible. The priestly writer or more likely school of writers, reflected long on what they had to say. Hillers goes on to call attention also to the covenant features of the dispensations. A new age begins with a new pact. The word "berith" is not used in Gen. 1 but is thereafter. For Gen. 1, we might say with Kaufmann that the order of the cosmos is a covenant which God has imposed upon it.<sup>28</sup>

God is the Creator and here we are dealing with his covenant with the Universe. In Creation and in the covenant with Noah, that is, in Gen. 1-11, we are involved with nature and all of humanity. We must emphasize *all* of humanity, not in contrast to the later covenant restricted to Israel but in relation to it. The "records" of both the Cosmic Covenant *and* the Sinai Covenant, were written down at a later time, perhaps both at the same time, and by the same people. The Sinai covenant and indeed all of the covenants,

are set within the context or the framework of the earlier and larger concern. "Universalism" was not a new development in Christianity. It was part of the Hebrew faith from the beginning. Paul spoke as a true Jew when he said that God is merciful to all.<sup>29</sup> Jocz points out that for the writer of Genesis, world history is covenant history.<sup>30</sup>

This awareness of the way in which Israel as a people developed out of, and in relation to, the rest of mankind, is not unique with Israel. There was a time when Israel did not exist. In all humbleness, Israelite writers knew they were a part of the whole, a small segment of the whole of humanity. The Sumerians, followed by the Akkadians and Hurrians, also traced their origins to a time before the flood in terms of the entire world.<sup>31</sup> Nor are the other motifs in Gen. 1-11—the Creation, the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, the Flood and the Tower of Babel—found only in Israel. These appear in Mesopotamian traditions and to some extent in Egyptian as well.<sup>32</sup> But what Israel inherited or borrowed from her ancestors and her neighbors, she rewrote in terms of the Covenant God who created the world and all that is in it. Thus the polytheism of Mesopotamia, which saw the sun and the moon and stars as gods, is transformed into a monotheism which describes these heavenly bodies as mere things formed at the word (Gen. 1:14) or by the hands (Gen 1:16) of *the* Creator.<sup>33</sup>

Jocz notes that Gen. 1 magnificently expresses the meaning of creation, that God is Lord in the most absolute sense. He feels Langdon B. Gilkey overstates the case when he claims that creation gives us the primary definition of God and that this definition gives meaning and significance to all that is said about God.<sup>34</sup> For Jocz, the stark cruelty of nature cannot be overlooked. This leads some to a meaningless vacuum-nihilism. That perspective changes when we relate creation and covenant. Then we find not only "creatio ex nihilo," but the motive behind the creation—God's eternal love for his creation.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Gerhard Hasel<sup>36</sup> suggests that H.H. Schmid overstates the case when he says that the creation faith is *the* theme of the Old Testament, the same way that Eichrodt sees the covenant as *the* Theme of the Old Testament, as Ludwig Kohler sees

the Lordship of God, Otto Baab sees the experience of God, Th. C. Vriezen sees communion with God, etc. But Hasel acknowledges the creation as a crucial and neglected theme. So too, creation and covenant have been neglected and overlooked.

Jocz goes on to speak against pantheism, depersonalized deified matter. God is *in* the world but he is Creator and the world is creature.<sup>37</sup> God has a relationship with nature. God has a covenant with nature. It is very clearly the suzerainty type of covenant. It is binding upon the natural world. He is the Creator who very clearly controls in his omnipotent power that which he has created. Where other ancient people—and some modern ones as well, deify the things of nature, the biblical record shows God as clearly above nature, which he binds and fetters to his control, but which like the ancient Hittite king and his vassal, God also in his mercy sustains and maintains. Alternately, one could say God gives a covenant to nature. Out of his “super” (above, separate from) natural power, he relates to the natural world. This is apparent in the “laws of nature” in Genesis 1, but it also appears in the Noachian covenant in 9:10-17 where the covenant is not only made with Noah but with “every living creature” that was with him, and the rainbow “is the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” It is “*the everlasting* covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.”

It is a covenant with the earth itself for “never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth” (vs. 11). Thus it goes beyond life or living things. His covenant extends to the “rocks and rills and templed hills.”

At first glance, this suzerainty covenant appears one way, completely monergistic. Lifeless rocks do not enter into an agreement to obey the Lord. In another sense however, natural things obey the laws of nature, God’s laws. So rocks and rills are obedient without choice. But Hebrew language is a personal language. There is no neuter. The things of nature are female or male rather than being neutral “its.” Hebrew writers thought that this personalized nature responded to God, indeed, should

respond. In Leviticus 25:2, "the land shall keep a sabbath to the Lord," every seventh year (vs. 4). If the holiness (derived from God) of the land is violated, it will vomit out its inhabitants (Lev.18:24-30; 20:22-26).<sup>37A</sup> In Psalm 150, the ecstatic poet calls upon everything that has breath, to praise the Lord (vs. 6). The psalmist in 104 proclaims his care of the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. At God's look, the earth trembles. At his touch, the mountains smoke (vs. 10-12, 32). He makes the mountains of Lebanon skip like a calf (Ps. 29:6). Let the floods clap their hands and the hills sing for joy (Ps. 98:8). Is. 55:12 has a vision of the mountains and hills singing while the trees clap their hands. Job 38:7 is a part of the whirlwind passage. God speaks to Job out of the whirlwind:

Where were you when the morning stars sang  
together for joy?

Jeremiah 33:20-26 tells of God's covenant with the day and night. Isaiah's vision of utopia includes the natural world. The animals shall live in peace with one another and with human beings. The earth will be full of the knowledge of God (II Isaiah 11:6-9). The desert shall bloom and rejoice with joy and singing (Is. 35:3). This concern with the salvation of the world is continued in the New Testament.<sup>38</sup> In Colossians 1:20, Paul says God was working through Jesus "to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven." II Corinthians 5:19 says God in Christ was reconciling the world unto himself. Jocz points out this goes far beyond humanity. We are involved here with the whole universe, the whole of creation, as in Romans 8 where Paul claims that the creation is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God... The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now..." (8:19-22). This universalistic concept of the salvation or restoration of the physical world is rooted in the Cosmic Covenant.

The last verse from Paul may be a reference to Jeremiah 12:4 and the destruction of the land, plant life, animals and birds. The Jeremianic description turns on the evil of men. A feminist ecologist proclaims God's cove-

nant with nature. Elizabeth Dodson Gray titled her book, "Why the Green Nigger?" The title is controversial. She claims we treat the green world, that is, the natural world, with the same derogatory exploitive contempt which racists have felt for Blacks. One reason is that we haven't understood that there is a covenant with nature itself.<sup>39</sup> In creation, she sees God reaching out to us. He "births us into being... pledges faithfulness to us in the steadiness of the seasons." In him we find "the bounty of food for eyes, mind, ears and stomachs. God's gift to us is this life, this world, this creation." Since we have not understood that there is a covenant in nature, it is not surprising that "the covenant in nature has never been properly understood." She overreaches a bit when she says that the "Judeo-Christian religion never saw that in the creation of the world there had been a covenant given." She is not quite right here for we have seen it is the supernatural God who *gives* a covenant to the natural world, which he has created. He lives in relationship to or with the natural world. However, this natural world is itself a revelation of God. We'll come back to natural revelation shortly. Here I want to remind us of the above awareness of nature's response to God and Anderson's outline of dispensations, each of which involves covenant though the term is not used for the creation. But Gray is probably right when she says the covenant has been seen as something apart from nature. The orthodox Hebrews were trying to avoid the nature religions, the fertility cult of Baalism.<sup>40</sup> In the process, she thinks they created a fertility cult of their own in their emphasis on circumcision.<sup>41</sup> It had to be apart to avoid also the pantheism of the ancient world in which the sun, moon and stars were themselves deities.

She is also right when she points out that our lack of understanding of God's covenant with all of creation has resulted in our failure to honor the creation as our side of the covenant. As a first step in correction, she urges Christopher Stone's proposal of rights for natural objects. One way we can do that is to see ourselves as parents in a family with the real world.<sup>42</sup> She has an interesting precedent here in St. Francis of Assisi who saw himself as a

brother of the sun and the fire and other aspects of nature. We are concerned here with living in harmony with nature. It's a traditional picture of Jesus and David and Orpheus and other figures both biblical and nonbiblical. It was basic to the pre-European American Indian. It relates to the whole concept "shalom" or "salaam," a living in peace with nature. Here it relates to modern ecology. Instead of exploiting nature, we are called to live in harmony in shalom, in peace with it.

William W. Everett's "Land Ethic: Toward a Covenantal Model,"<sup>43</sup> has a similar but different perspective. He notes the current debates over land use. These reflect definitions of parties, claims and models, which shape land ethics. He identifies the parties as *God, Nature, Society* and *Persons*. He goes on to suggest that the Hebrews believed God was the real owner of the land. As the Creator of the world, it belonged to him. He gave the Israelites the land in the Conquest. He could do this because it was his to give. But while he gave it, he gave it in trust, a kind of lease in which he remained the owner. The first fruits of the harvest were his as an acknowledgment of that ownership. The stewardship part of this comes up in the next section. Here the emphasis is on God's relationship, God's covenant with the land, the created world. Everett goes on to point out that the land shared with the people a common holiness based on its consecration to the Lord. The land shared in Sabbath rest even as God and the people. The land, like the people, represents God's gracious goodness. He sees God as one who stands apart from the land but his claims are to determine the way it's used and its meaning. Later on, the land became a transcendent symbol, like Torah and circumcision and perhaps the covenant itself. But the particularist meaning, reference to a particular land, has never completely disappeared. We see it today in Zionism and in Christian communes which call for a return to "the land."

The second party concerned with land use is nature. Like Stone, and Gray, Everett claims nature has rights. The land, along with water, air and all living things, needs to live in harmony—in balance—and accord with nature's

laws. Society and persons as the third and fourth parties remind us of the creation of people.

In summary, we might note Jocz' point that human life takes place in both history and the cosmos. Both history and creation stand under the providence of God.<sup>44</sup> That relationship is a covenantal one. It is a commonplace in biblical studies to say that God acts in history.<sup>45</sup> But the history is in the created world with which God has a covenant. Jocz goes on to suggest that the covenant forms the internal basis of creation and gives meaning to both history and the cosmos. It stands for "Immanuel," "God with us."<sup>46</sup>

### THE COVENANT AND MAN

A second aspect of God's control of nature, his suzerainty covenant, is the relationship he established between the natural world and his creature, the human person. In Gen. 1:28, God gives dominion over the world to the human race. This is repeated in the Noachian covenant in which all living things are given to man for food. Noah and all his descendents participate in the covenant which God makes with the earth and in the promise that the "water shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh" (9:15). This relationship between man and the natural world is put into covenantal terms in Hosea.

And I will make for you a covenant on that day  
with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air,  
and the creeping things of the ground. (2:18)

The phrase "on that day" may be a reference to the new covenant of Jeremiah 31, and the new creation, so prominent in the book of Isaiah. Where Hosea 2 goes on to speak of safety in war, Is. 11 and 65 speak of safety within the natural world.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the  
leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf  
and the lion and faling together, and a little child  
shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall feed; their young  
shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat

straw like the ox.

The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (11:6-9; 65:25)

This new creation takes in not only people and the animals, but "new heavens and a new earth" (Is. 65:17; 66:22). This idea is repeated in the New Testament (II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1).

The power of God over the natural world—God as the creator and as One who will form a new creation—is closely related in II Isaiah to redemption and salvation, and to the idea of trust. Israel is called to put its trust in the Lord for he has the power to save, and he will save his people. This concept is carried into the New Testament in terms of Christ as the Savior for the new creation has arrived in him: "...if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." (II Corinthians 5:17).

As God controls the natural world he has created and established his covenant with it, so he establishes his covenant with his human creatures. Like the animal kingdom, man is a created form of life. He is very definitely a part of the natural world, and yet he is not really "of the world" to borrow a phrase from Christianity. Thus, as noted earlier, God establishes a covenant between man and the world of nature. Man is given dominion over the world. He does not acquire this on his own. It is a suzerainty covenant of control. Mankind is very busy exploiting this control over the natural world. As Gray and others have pointed out, man for the most part has forgotten the other side of the covenant—his own lordship's responsibility to his "vassal" "nature"—to maintain and sustain it. Instead, man causes air pollution and water pollution and continues with the ruthless destruction of wildlife and natural resources—timber, minerals, scenery, beaches.

In recent years, the Judeo-Christian tradition has been blamed for this destruction. The biblical idea of domin-

ion supposedly has resulted in the rape of nature. This is of course a perversion of dominion, even as human rape is a perversion of love. This is dominion as a power play without the suzerainty covenant that continues concern for the covenantee, in this case, the earth. Alternately, to mix metaphors, as Everett has pointed out, the world belongs to God as its real owner. He has given man dominion as the owner of a farm hires a manager to care for his property. G. Ernest Wright calls man the ruling lord of the earth. *But* he is also the servant responsible to the Creator.<sup>47</sup> Our whole concept of stewardship is ultimately based on this "Cosmic Covenant." This appears again and again in the Bible. In such passages as Deuteronomy 8, the people of Israel are warned not to forget that the land is a gift from God. In Wellhausen's theory of JEDP, these words were penned c. 650 B.C. when Israel had indeed forgotten that God was the giver of land and covenant, a time very much like our own. The question of the breaking of the covenant is another major issue. Here we might note a modern twist on man's dominion over the world.

William G. Pollard, then of the Institute of Nuclear Studies at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, noted that in previous eras, man's dominion over nature was partial and limited at best.<sup>48</sup> There was little danger of any very extensive exercise of that dominion. Today, we are in a totally different situation, most obvious in the case of nuclear energy. "God has made more hydrogen bombs than anyone else."<sup>49</sup> It was inevitable that man would eventually come to dominion over nuclear energy as well. This dominion can be exercised to be a blessing or a curse. That reality of modern times is as good an answer as any to the charge that it is Christianity's fault that man has raped nature.

Pollard suggested that the crisis which faces Christianity is of a much deeper nature. In its passion to subdue the earth, the spirit of the age has rejected religion. At least in its traditional sense, it's considered irrelevant. Parenthetically, we note that such passion is a religion but not the Judeo-Christian tradition so much as a heresy of it. Pollard thinks that by the year 2,000, none of the great religious institutions that have inspired and informed civili-

zation for 20 centuries, will have any significant role in a new planetary society. He himself felt that the supernatural reality which includes heaven and eternity, is not affected by the prevailing convictions of our present age. That supernatural is a part of reality no matter what man's opinion of it. While man thinks he has made himself, he remains in fact a creature in common with all else in space and time, a creature brought into existence by his creator. The preservation of this awareness of our creaturehood, is the central and primary Christian responsibility in the midst of the current revolution.

Using a different paradigm, Walter Brueggeman sees the covenant as subversive.<sup>49A</sup> Subversion means undermining and exposure to dismantling. This subversion is aimed at a triumphalist culture while the covenant offers an alternative perception of how things could be on earth. Our culture is a culture that has not kept its promises. It has praised a God who is remote, the "Deus absconditis" of deism. This model of God allows man to model himself into a self-sufficient one who is aloof from the cares of the world. But this "laissez-faire" idea of non-interference, without care for others, is not the biblical view of things. He points to Psalm 82 where the self-serving notion of godhead is rejected. The call to:

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;  
 Maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.  
 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them  
 from the hand of the wicked."(Psalm 82:3-4)

This God of the covenant is one who embraces the rabble (Exodus 12:38; Numbers 11:4; cf. Luke 7:22-23, I Peter 2:9-10). The prophet Hosea has penetrated the heart of this God. Here is one who breaks with convention and maintains covenant, not because the partner is suitable but because of the very nature of this God. Isaiah has summed it up in saying,

He was despised and rejected by men and  
 acquainted with grief, as one from whom they  
 hide their faces,  
 He was despised and we esteemed him not"(53:3).

While the axe cannot vaunt itself over the hand that wields it (Is. 10:15) and man the creature remains a creature even when he pretends he is the Creator, the biblical tradition claims that it is the Creator who has given man special status within the creation. This special status within the Cosmic Covenant is shown most strikingly in the description of man's creation in Genesis 1, reflected so beautifully in Psalm 8.<sup>50</sup>

When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast made; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?

Yet thou has made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor.

Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands...(Psalm 8:3-6a)

Wright has said there are two possible pictures of man, both true. One is man's glory. The other is his misery.<sup>51</sup> Here we have both man's insignificance and his glory. In Gen. 1:26, God seems to be speaking to his heavenly court, and says,

"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion..."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (vs. 27)

In Gen. 2 we have a slightly different picture of man's creation, but with the same special status.

...then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (vs.7)

We could stop and ask whether this "image of God," the "imago dei," concept means that God has a physical body.<sup>52</sup> But the covenant is a relationship, and it seems to me that a more pertinent question is "what does this special status as human beings mean to us?" Is it a source of pride to us,

in our covenant relationship with God, or is the image really a source of great humility? It is humility which is reflected in Ps. 8.: "...what is man that thou art mindful of him?" (vs. 4a) With our expanding knowledge of the universe, the vast reaches of space, our unfolding ignorance of the cosmos, man has reason enough to be humble before his Creator. And yet, we are created but little lower than God (vs 5a). It is this "high" status of man in the created order of things which has prevailed among men, in human society. Man, by and large, has not been very humble before his Creator nor in relation to the creation.

We are on the edges of what has been called "natural law." This doctrine is perhaps more common to Roman Catholics than to Protestants, and the New Testament than the Old. Jocz notes the term as more a Greek than a biblical concept. Biblically, the laws within nature are not mechanical but personal and covenantal.<sup>53</sup> Natural law is binding on all people, according to Jewish tradition. It was known to Adam and Noah. In the New Testament book of Romans, 1:18-32, 2:1-16, we find the apostle Paul saying that there are moral laws which are known to all mankind. No one has any excuse for violating these, whether Jew or Gentile. In a word, God's will applies to everyone, Western/Eastern, believer/non-believer. One cannot be excused from obeying the will of God, giver of this suzerainty covenant. God gives this Cosmic Covenant to man as Man, and not to Jew or Gentile. Man as a human being is bound in an eternal covenant and is obliged to obey the will of his sovereign Lord. At one and the same time, this sovereign Lord's mercy is extended toward all people. His mercy has already been given to man in the creation. The entire human race is in covenant with God, what Joseph L. Allen calls "the inclusive covenant."<sup>54</sup>

One might draw a parallel to the creation itself. Creation has several purposes, one of which is of interest to us here.

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork. (Ps. 19:11).

All of nature is a witness to the glory and greatness of God. The psalmist is aware of this general revelation, for he speaks as a man, and not as a Hebrew. However, the

general revelation is not enough.<sup>55</sup> God has revealed himself and his will to Israel. While Christians see his supreme revelation in Jesus the Christ, it has been suggested that God continues to reveal himself and his will to mankind at large. The general revelation in nature is not enough. The psalmist himself is aware that God remains the "hidden" God. Neither he nor we know God in the fullest, so natural law is not sufficient or at least it is not all there is to law, revelation and morality.

### ADAM AND EVE

The story of Adam and Eve remains literally true for some people today, while others consider it symbolic. The biblical concept of creation remains with its understanding that it is God who created life and specifically human life. He is the father of all people. It is here in the creation stories of P and J. It appears again in the genealogy in the New Testament where the ancestry of Jesus is traced back to Adam, "the son of God." It is present in such books as Amos, who shows that God's control and concern is with all humanity. God is the Creator, the father of all human beings.

In this day of women's liberation movements, we note the equality of the creation of man and woman, female and male, in Gen. 1:28. Both women and men are created in the image of God, suggesting that God is both feminine and masculine. There was no neuter in biblical Hebrew so God, like all other nouns, is one or the other. The patriarchal nature of society and the gender of biblical compilers accounts readily enough for the choice of masculine for continuing reference to God. But here, at the beginning of the text, is an awareness that God is both and both women and men are created in his image. Their equal footing is a covenantal relation, already recognized by the Yahwist in Genesis 2. Verses 18-20 set forth a suzerainty relationship with the beasts while 21-24 establish a parity covenant, a relation among equals. It is a relationship that takes precedent over the ties of blood and kinship and forms the basis of the marriage relationship as a covenantal one. Their encounter as personal beings leads to living for each

other in responsible co-operation which draws its strength from their common encounter with God. Or, at least, it was supposed to be that way. Someone has suggested that in the Yahwist narrative, the sexes are unequal. The woman was created after the man. God clearly saved his best creation until last. Woman is the crown of God's creative activity! Taken seriously, we have the foundation of a suzerainty covenant in which the woman gives to the man her relationship. That the first born does not automatically have the priority in God—human relationships, is a common thread in the biblical tradition (e.g., I Samuel 16:6-13).

In the story of the Garden of Eden, we find the first commandment is to enjoy the Garden. The prohibition is that they are not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:15-17). In the sequel in Gen. 3:1-13, Adam and Eve do just that. Eve is tempted and resists. Then she offers the fruit to Adam. Without any resistance at all, he also eats the fruit. His is the greater sin. Eve at least resisted! But traditionally, the celibate males and misogynists who have interpreted the text, have put the greater blame on Eve. In one sense, they are right. But it is only a sense in which they and we are all guilty which should make us very humble indeed. The story of Adam and Eve is the story of us all.

After they ate the forbidden,

... the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.'

First we sin and then we try to justify our sin. We sin, and then we pass the blame to someone else. Or, we include

others in our sin and justify ourselves because, "everyone's doing it." Adam and Eve sinned. A modern wag has asked about the fruit. What was it? The traditional answer is that it was an apple. He, being more tuned into evolutionary theory, insists it was a banana. That of course is not really fair to evolutionary theory which says that man and monkeys have developed from an earlier split in the evolutionary tree. But it matters not. The point is that this whole event in the garden was not some primordial ancestor, some biblical *Zinjanthropus* from Uldaivai Gorge involving all mankind in sin. Rather, Adam, whose name is good Hebrew for "man," represents "Everyman" (as acknowledged in Federal Theology) and Eve represents "Everywoman." We are all our own Adam and Eve according to this interpretation.

Someone compared this to the child who slips into the kitchen after school. He smells the fresh baked cookies that have just been put into the cookie jar. Momma is upstairs but she heard him come in. She shouts down the stairs, "Don't take any of those cookies. They're for the church bazaar." But the child, being his own Eve, listens to his own senses. The smell and the vision and the thought is overwhelming. "Momma said not to take any, but did she really mean not to take *any*, not even one? It seems most unlikely that momma would say that. After all, momma loves me. And after all, those cookies smell so good, and they look so good, why they must surely *be* good." So when you saw that the cookies were good for food, and a delight to the eyes, and you just knew they would make you feel good, you took some. And then your little brother came into the kitchen and you slipped him some too.

Could we not take our more serious sins and show how temptation presents itself? We rationalize ourselves into thinking that surely this once, it must be alright and surely God won't mind. But God does mind, for we have violated the covenant. When Amos and the prophets denounced the nations around Israel and Judah for their sins, they did not denounce them for violating Israelite Law. They denounced them for their inhumanity to people. The other nations were not a part of the Israelite covenant, but

they were a part of this Cosmic Covenant. People, as people, whatever our religion, nationality, or race, remain a part of this Cosmic Covenant yet today. Or, to paraphrase a bit, Man has been endowed by his Creator, with certain inalienable rights and responsibilities which he cannot rightfully give up, nor can they rightfully be taken away.

Anderson has noted that

In our time men are faced with the fundamental religious question: The question of the ultimate source, meaning, and destiny of human life. There are many answers which compete for validity, many idols which rival for man's allegiance. The decision about the meaning of our existence cannot be postponed, for life hastens on to its conclusion and in this kind of world tomorrow is more uncertain than ever before.

The Book of Genesis is Israel's confession of faith that the Lord, who spoke and acted in her history is the Lord of all mankind and of all creation.<sup>56</sup>

*Adam as Representative:* Federal or covenant theology is a major study in itself. Here we can simply note this picture of Adam as the ancestor, and hence the federal representative of the human race. In this federal position, the federal theology says that God made a covenant with Adam. It was a covenant of works which promised Adam eternal life if he obeyed the commandments. Adam broke the covenant. Since this Fall from relationship, God has continued in a covenant of grace with mankind, offering the same blessings to all who believe in Jesus as the Second Adam. As humanity are heirs of the First Adam, so Christians are the heirs of the Second Adam.<sup>57</sup> Alternately, one could say that humanity stands in relation to God in a broken covenant. All the Christians who have broken the covenant, stand in a similar relationship through the Second Adam. The issue here is whether a covenant says that God's covenant with the world, the earth, all living things, all humanity, is an everlasting covenant. Human beings may break it, but it is still there. This issue appears again for the specific covenants in Israel, both original and new

Israel, as well as more recent history. It is part of the concept of restoration in the Kingdom of God as envisioned by Judaism and Christianity.

### CAIN

Here, because of its relevance to the Cain and Abel story, I want to take note of one particular form of brokenness known as racism. It is incredible that the Judeo-Christian heritage with all of its talk of "love thy neighbor" (Leviticus 19:18; Psalm 14:1-3, Matthew 5:43), has so often failed to stop this violation of covenant. Racists from time to time try to claim that the Bible supports their view. The story of Cain and Abel records that God put a mark on Cain. Numbers of people and groups have claimed that this mark is the dark skin of Blacks and the colored peoples of Asia as well as Africa, a designation sometimes given to the American Indian as well. They have not read the text.

And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him (Genesis 4:15b)

John Wilkinson has suggested that Cain had a covenant with God. He admits it is unusual to speak in these terms, but it is there, nonetheless. He writes on behalf of Jacques Ellul's conception of the city. Ellul argues in closed logical circles. But he makes his circles universal. This is reminiscent of Edwin Markham's poem, "Outwitted."

He drew a circle that shut me out—  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But love and I had the wit to win—  
We drew a circle that took him in.

The universality Wilkinson sees in Ellul, is a theological principle—the covenant. "In the covenant of God, all our actions and values will find a safe and secure resting place, even those" like the city, that may contain more evil than good. God condemns Cain's sin. But "God's rigor toward sinners is *never* the complete story." He goes on to point out that this should not be all that surprising. In our notion of contract, we have "sanction" (sacred word) which both authorizes the contract and implies detriment for

violation of the contract. He quotes E.C. Blackman's belief that God's relationship to man is "judgment and mercy, mercy and judgment." The two are not to be understood apart from one another.<sup>58</sup>

His thought has merit on several counts. Earlier, the Yahwist has already noted that God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden as punishment for their sin. Yet, in the very act of expulsion, God clothed them. He continued to care for them. God continues in relationship even when the covenant is broken. The inclusive covenant remains, even when broken. Later on, we find the prophets condemning their people. But even in the act of condemning, they proclaim God's willingness to forgive. The punishment is designed to bring Israel back into active relationship. His choice of Abraham is so that his descendents will be a blessing to all humanity (Gen. 12:1-3). His choice of Israel is so that Israel can be a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6). Ultimately, his will is that all mankind shall be brought back into true relationship, that the broken covenant shall be healed, or, that there will be a new covenant with God's law upon the heart.

Here, in opposition to the continued breaking of covenant known as racism, we note that Cain remained in covenant with God. The mark, which was probably like the tribal mark which bedouin wear on their foreheads, was given to Cain for protection! It would be a travesty to suggest that the color of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s skin protected him from the sniper's bullet. It would be the grossest exegesis to suggest that the thousands of Blacks lynched in this country were protected by the color of their skin. It would be insane to raise such a question with the Blacks of South Africa or the Blacks of our American city slums. Such a rationale for racism is a complete perversion of the biblical text.

The biblical writer seems to be saying, incidently, that the first cities were established by the murderer Cain, expressing prejudice of his own. The idea may parallel or be repeated by the Tower of Babel story in Gen. 11:1-9. The prophet Hosea looked to the primitive desert days as a purer time for ancient Israel. The Yahwist would not be

the first writer to relate civilization and wickedness.<sup>59</sup> I come from Iowa, a predominantly rural area. While cities are growing, there are still large areas of farm land. I live in the metropolitan East. It is not unusual for someone to hear of my origins and suggest that people out there are probably more religious, more honest, more reliable, etc. In an international meeting of law enforcement officers, representatives reported on crime in their home countries. After hearing the huge statistics of the United States, England, and other "advanced" nations, a third world representative apologized for his small statistics. But, he added, we are getting more civilized all the time so next year I expect to be able to give you a better report with higher crime rates.

Those who are aware of the less lovable features of our cities may be inclined to agree with such a prejudice of the Yahwist writer, as does Jacques Ellul.<sup>60</sup> Whether it is warranted is another matter, of course. The point here is that the "mark of Cain" has absolutely nothing to do with the color of human skin. It was given for Cain's protection, not his destruction. Finally we should note that if one takes the biblical text literally, as being literally true, then all of the descendants of Cain all perished in the Flood. Unless one argues that Noah or his wife, and hence all mankind, were somehow related to Cain, or that one of the three daughters-in-law were related to Cain, all the Cainites were wiped out.

Before we leave Cain in the Land of Wandering, we must take note of a very crucial question and answer in the entire story. In Gen. 4:9, God asks Cain, "Where is thy brother Abel?" Cain responds that he does not know. He asks what is surely a rhetorical question. "Am I my brother's keeper?" For Cain, the answer is presumably or hopefully "No." Yet the context is clear. Cain knew, and we know, that the real answer is "Yes." Cain violated that relationship of loving care for his brother, his neighbor. And human beings have been violating the covenant ever since.

Here again, as with Adam and Eve and Everyman and Everywoman, we have an aetiology, an origin or a beginning. One might believe quite literally in the histori-

cal existence of Cain and Abel or one might see the two figures as metaphorical. The truth of the story remains. We are called to be "our brother's keeper" but instead, we have killed him. Man's inhumanity to man is proverbial but historically all too real. The standard of God remains. We are called to care for one another. Here again it is important to underline or emphasize that the biblical story is not about Israelites caring only for Israelites or Christians caring for Christians and so on. The Cain and Abel story is in the beginning. It is a concern for human beings as human beings. Here is what one might call universalism built into the foundations of the biblical tradition.

### NOAH

A second great rationale for racism is also suggestive of the biblical writers' prejudice against settled agriculture and Canaanites. After the Flood, Noah planted a vineyard. From the grapes, he made wine. He drank too much and became drunk. The wine and drunkenness were more common to sedentary civilization than to the desert nomadic existence. The latter was part of the Hebrew heritage of Patriarchal times and the wilderness wandering period after the exodus and before the conquest.

Noah threw off his clothes and lay naked in his tent. With our Greek heritage of athletics, we think little or nothing of a child seeing the nakedness of his father in the locker room or while taking a bath. In this ancient society, it was wrong, a taboo, to see the nakedness of one's parent. Noah's son Ham unwittingly walked into Noah's tent and saw his father nude. He told his brothers who carried a robe into the tent, walking backward so *they* would not see the nudity, and covered their father. I would say that Ham acted honorably to have his father's nakedness covered but Noah did not see it that way, whether because he had a hangover and was not thinking straight, or because there's more to the story than we have preserved for us in the text. When Noah found out about Ham seeing him in the nude, Noah pronounced a curse.

Racists say that the curse changed the color of Ham and his descendents to Black or dark. They feel they are

justified in hating Blacks because the Blacks are cursed by Noah. Its a strange mental gymnastic. Both the Old and New Testaments say, "love thy neighbor" without distinctions of color. No matter who curses whom, the biblical law hardly authorizes one to hate a whole people in violation of what Jesus called one of the two great commandments. However, the interpretation is that since Ham is the ancestor of dark skinned people, they are cursed. Biblically speaking, and of course no modern anthropologist accepts such an explanation of racial origins (the Bible has no reference to orientals), the idea is that since the Ethiopians are descended from Ham, all dark skinned peoples are cursed. Thus modern racists use this curse of Noah's as an excuse to rape, rob, enslave and murder, hate and deceive dark skinned people.

As with the Cain story, we have here another example of biblical illiteracy. Noah does not curse Ham in this story. Nor does he curse the ancestors of the Egyptians, Ethiopians, or other dark skinned people. He curses Canaan. The land of Palestine is not Africa or India, the Far East or America. Note that the descendents of Canaan (Gen. 10:15-19) are not said to live in Africa.<sup>61</sup> The curse is that Canaan is to be a slave to his brothers Shem and Japheth (9:25). At the time the Yahwist was writing, c. 950 B.C., Canaan was indeed enslaved, not to the descendents of Japheth and not to all of the descendents of Shem, but to one descendent line, the Hebrews. Anthropologically, and linguistically, the Canaanites and the Israelites were of the same ethnic and linguistic stock. Modern racism, which is less than 200 years old, thus grasps at nonexistent straws, in its attempt to bend the Bible to its evil.<sup>62</sup> "The Old Testament knows nothing of races which are basically inferior and unworthy to be called human." There is "no room for racial pride or arrogance, for all are equal before God and their Creator."<sup>63</sup>

### THE NOACHIC COVENANT

The obvious evil of racism should not obscure or be used to hide the sinfulness of Everyman and Everywoman. Both Old and New Testaments claim that all have sinned and

come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23; Ps. 14:1; Gen. 8:21). In the humility referred to above, each person and each group can find room to say its "mea culpa" ("by my fault"). The Noachic covenant speaks to the human condition. B. Davie Napier has pointed out that the Noachic covenant is with the whole creation in perpetuity, despite the evil of men's hearts.<sup>64</sup>

This is part of the "unconditional" nature of the covenant. It appears in Gen. 6:18 where God simply tells Noah, "I will make my covenant with you." It is not an "if" proposition. It is not a matter of God saying to Noah that there will be a covenant "if" Noah is righteous. Noah had already been found righteous. It was assumed that he would obey God's command, because he was righteous. In the post-Flood situation, we find the covenant in 9:8-17.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him,

'Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.' God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.'

This is usually seen as an obligation-less covenant—a covenant given to man without any obligations on man's part. All the obligations are on the part of God who will

never again flood the earth in the way of Genesis 7 and 8. In a way, this view overlooks the obligations which God lays down in Gen. 9:1-6.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it.

Here is one source of the so-called Noachic laws, related to natural law, seen as binding on all people, not just Hebrews or Jews. Rabbinic exegesis, as codified by Maimonides, lists seven of these: prohibition of idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, eating a limb from a living animal, and the command to establish courts, or, more generally, to establish justice. Abstinance from blood and the prohibition of murder are the only two mentioned in Gen. 9. The one is concerned with the sacredness of life and the other the sacred inviolability of human life created in the image of God (9:6).<sup>65</sup> The other rabbinic laws come from various interpretations. "Courts" come from "he commanded" in Gen. 2:16 where the phrase, "the Lord" provides the basis for the prohibition of blasphemy. The Christian doctrine of natural law comes from Acts 15:20 and Romans 1:18-32, 2:1-16. When Gentiles began joining The Way, the Book of Acts says some thought the Gentile converts should all become Jews. Others thought it unnecessary. The compromise was that these Gentile converts were to abstain from pollution of idols, unchastity, things strangled, and

from blood. One of these is paralleled in Gen. 9. Natural law, universally binding on all, is found in Philo, Irenaeus, and Tertullian. Philo (c. 20 B.C.-c. 50 A.D.) listed the prohibitions against murder and eating blood, and three of the rabinnic Noachic laws. Irenaeus (c. 130-c. 200 A.D.) equated natural law with the Ten Commandments. Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225 A.D.) does not specify.<sup>66</sup>

Obligations preface the covenant. While technically there are only two prohibitions, later generations have interpreted these as four or seven or thirty. There are positive commandments as well. Verse 3, permission to eat meat, is positive for those who like meat. Vegetarians and the animals might see it as a negative commandment! Verse 1 says

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

Verse 7 says:

Be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and subdue it.

People concerned with the population explosion feel these verses are negative. Others point out these commandments have been fulfilled and it's time to stop. The doublet might be seen as a single command to have children. "Fruitful" can be interpreted as useful or productive in human achievement. Since 9:6 says, "God made man in his image," 9:1 and 7 can be related to Gen. 1:28 with its additional thought of dominion.

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

If this approach is taken, the command to the first woman and man is here repeated to the continuing human race. Gen. 1 and 9 are both from the priestly source, according to some literary analysts. Von Rad here emphasizes God's continuing presence. These commandments are reminders that God has not withdrawn from the world. He watches over all life and has not given up his sovereign claim over all.<sup>67</sup> The Enlightenment concept of deism suggests God

created the world and then left it to its own devices to tick out its existence. These commands claim God continues in the world, maintaining and sustaining it.

But while there are obligations, some scholars insist the covenant is without them. There is no obligation whatever expected of Noah and his descendents, expressed or implied.<sup>68</sup> God will never again curse the ground, even though the imagination of man's heart is evil (Gen. 6:5, cause for the Flood; Gen. 8:22, God's acceptance of the inevitable?). God is the one under obligation. God is bound. Man is free. Yet, Delbert Hillers goes on to talk about the similar conditions of the covenant with Abraham in Gen. 15. There he says that while obligations are not spelled out for Abraham, it is assumed that Abraham will continue to walk righteously before the Lord. Cuthbert A. Simpson suggests the possibility that the original narrative went from 9:2 to 9:9, so the command to be fruitful was the implicit condition of the covenant.<sup>69</sup>

What the biblical text does not say is that the continuance of the covenant depends on human obedience to the obligations of 9:1-7 or any obligations. The juxtaposition of vss. 1-7 and 8-17 could imply these obligations, however; at least the final editor or redactor thought they went together. Others today say that while the obligations are there, the covenant is the gift of God, what has been called his prevenient grace. Von Rad sees the rainbow as the sign of the covenant, "high above man, between heaven and earth, as pledge of a true 'gratia praeveniens'!"<sup>70</sup> John Murray suggests all of the covenants are covenants of grace.<sup>71</sup> But we remain with the value, the importance, the need, for human response. The offering of a gift at least suggests the response of receiving the gift. In human relationships, the gift can be sent back stamped "Refused." It might simply sit there, undelivered, or delivered but unopened. Unification Thought suggests a division of responsibility in the God-Man relationship. God has, symbolically, 95% of the responsibility while Man has 5%. The amount is insignificant but symbolically important. Man is to carry out his 5% with 100% commitment and effort. It is reminiscent of the old Scotch Calvinists who

prayed as though everything depended on God and worked as though everything depended on them. Officially monergistic, everything depends on God, so prayer has no power to accomplish that which is prayed for, and the pray-er is simply going through some kind of motion. But the reality remained that they worked as though *everything* depended on their effort, monergistic with man being the one.

The Noachic covenant is a "berith 'olam." It is an everlasting covenant (9:16; Sirach or Ecclesiasticus 44:17-18). It is promised renewal in Isaiah 54:9. This covenant reflects God's steadfastness (Is. 54:8-10) rather than man's. While people withhold themselves from relationship with God, he continues to maintain and sustain the whole earth. God's "hesed," his "faithfulness," extends from generation to generation, to all people, to all of creation.<sup>72</sup> The everlasting character of covenant reappears throughout history (Gen. 17:7, 13, 19; Ex. 31:16; Lev. 24:8; Num. 18:19; 25:13, etc.) and remains with us today. The whole of humanity, the whole of creation, is in covenant relation with God, a covenant that has eternal validity.<sup>73</sup>

The primeval history or "urgeschichte" of Gen. 1-11, ends with the Tower of Babel story (11:19). Some have suggested the ziggurats of ancient Mesopotamia as the background to this story. The ziggurats were temple towers, man-made mountains of mud brick. A huge staircase led to the peak. On the top was a temple which may have been regularly used as the meeting place of heaven and earth, or it may have played such a role in the New Year festival. "Bab-el" means the "gate of god," or the doorway to heaven.

The biblical interpretation is a tower to heaven to help people escape a future flood. Such a purpose denies or refuses to trust God's promise of Gen. 9:11 and 15. Perhaps the greater concern is what amounts to a rebellion against God, a kind of Promethean defiance. The tower would make them independent of God, as Prometheus' stolen fire would in Greek mythology. Here the parallel is more likely with the sin of Adam and Eve. The building of the tower was stopped when God confused the language of the people. This is probably an aetiology (study of origins), an attempt to explain the presence of different languages

on earth.

There is no covenant ceremony in this story. The word "berith" is not used. There is a relationship here but it is a broken relationship. The scattering of people abroad might be seen as a parallel to the exile or ostracism of Adam and Eve from the Garden, and of Cain to the Land of Wandering.

The concept of sin and punishment is as prevalent in the Bible as the theme of covenant promise and fulfillment. In addition to Adam and Eve and Cain, the Flood was punishment for human sin. The Mesopotamian flood tradition says the gods started the flood out of caprice. People made too much noise. Gen. 6:5-13 however, says the Flood was the result of God's judgment on sinful humanity.

We might see in this theme of sin and judgment a preliminary answer to the question of obligations in the covenant. God's relation to or his concern for humanity is always ethical. In this sense, the very nature of the relationship carries obligations. But the prior story is God's grace. He reaches out to create the universe and then humanity. He stays in relationship to people, even when they sin. He continues to work in the world, calling people to follow and serve him, to be righteous. The story continues with the call of Abraham.

McKenzie notes that most of Gen. 2-11 with its theme of judgment, comes from the Yahwist writer. He does not think J quite reaches the scope of the Christian concept of original sin. He thinks J intended this primitive history as an aetiology of at least some features of human life. The basic sin involved is idolatry, a form of the fertility cult. Rather than "a" Fall, there is a whole series of falls, each an instance of sin and judgment that go far beyond the immediate sinner. When Yahweh reveals himself to Abraham, it is a saving act which breaks the sequence of judgment.<sup>74</sup>

Alternately, one could say that Genesis 1-11 is representative of Yahweh's salvation, that is, his loving concern for all humanity. As noted earlier, the Hebrew writers were aware that Israel was but a small segment of the whole of humanity. They were aware of God's concern for all. We hear it in Solomon's prayer in I Kings 8:43 and II

Chronicles 6:33,

... that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name and fear thee...

We hear it in Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6 and Israel's mission to be a light to the nations.

Israel's own story begins with Abraham, but it is set in the context of concern for all humanity.

## NOTES

### Abbreviations

ANET	Pritchard, <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i>
AUOT	Anderson, <i>Understanding the Old Testament</i>
AYGC	Albright, <i>Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan</i>
CC	<i>The Christian Century</i> , Vol. I
ETOT II	Eichrodt, <i>Theology of the Old Testament</i> , Vol. II
HCHBI	Hillers, <i>Covenant</i>
IB	<i>The Interpreter's Bible</i>
JJC	Jocz, <i>The Covenant</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
MTOT	McKenzie, <i>A Theology of the Old Testament</i>
SAHT	Van Seters, <i>Abraham in History and Tradition</i>
SGAB	Speiser, <i>Genesis</i> (The Anchor Bible)
TAB	Thompson, <i>Approaches to the Bible</i>
VRG	von Rad, <i>Genesis</i>
WOTT	Wright, <i>The Old Testament and Theology</i>

<sup>1</sup>Aldos J. Tos, *Approaches to the Bible: The old Testament* ; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963, p. 47. Biblical quotations are from the revised standard version of the Bible.

<sup>2</sup>*Theology of the Old Testament*; NY: Harper & Brothers, 1958, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup>Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* Vol. II; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967, p. 97. This volume is abbreviated hereafter as ETOT II. ETOT I is Vol. I; London: SCM Press, 1961.

<sup>4</sup>C.F. Whitley, "Covenant and Commandment in Israel, " *The*

*Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (JNES) 22 (1963), 37-48. Bernhard W. Anderson, "Creation," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (IDB) 1 (1962), 726, with numerous citations. William D. Davies suggests that the notion of creation as a totality is late. He notes the use of "bara," "to create," is not used of Yahweh before the Exile. Cf. his *The Gospel and the Land*; Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1974, pp. 12-13. John L. McKenzie says "critics unanimously agree, there is no clear doctrine of creation in pre-exilic literature." *A Theology of the Old Testament*; Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1974, p. 187. Abbreviated hereafter as MTOT.

<sup>5</sup>ETOT II: 97.

<sup>6</sup>MTOT-187, says this is the first biblical source in which the creation theme is prominent.

<sup>7</sup>IDB 1:726. G. Ernest Wright, *God Who Acts*; London: SCM Press, 1952. Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, *The Book of the Acts of God*; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1957. Bertil Abrektson pointed out that ancient Near Eastern people in general believed their gods acted in history. *History and the Gods*; Lund, Sweden: Coniectanea Biblica, 1967. ETOT I: 41-44, acknowledges the ancient Near Eastern conception. He cites Cyrus of Persia and Ramses II as kings who attributed their victories to their gods. But he goes on to insist that it never occurred to other peoples "to identify the nerve of the historical process as the purposeful activity of God or to integrate the whole by subordinating it to a single great religious conception," i.e., the covenant. He explains this by observing that their concept of divinity was imprisoned in their Nature mythology. The Hebrews took the myth and historicized it, linking creation and history.

<sup>8</sup>For the history of the Graf Wellhausen thesis, cf. R.J. Thompson, *Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism since Graf*; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970. Gerhard von Rad notes that the dates are only guesses. In any event, the dates refer only to the final compilation of the sources. Within the sources are individual elements which are sometimes very ancient. *Genesis*, 2nd ed. (Old Testament Library); London: SCM Press, 1963, p. 24, cited hereafter as VRG. Brevard S. Childs doubts the independent existence of "P." He sees the whole compilation as more complex than this. Cf. his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979, pp. 136-150. Others doubt the existence of "E" or suggest "E" is simply a redaction or

second edition of "J." Some say the Tetrateuch is all "P" and Deuteronomy through II Kings is all "D." Cf. Ivan Engnell, *A Rigid Scrutiny*; Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969, pp. 50-67. Yehezkel Kaufmann considers "P" the earliest of the four sources rather than the last. *The Religion of Israel from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960, pp. 175-200. William F. Albright accepted the general theory but cautioned that many variations ascribed to the four sources are simply different recensions of the Hebrew text. It is irrational to suggest that every flaw or inconsistency represents a different document. *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1968, p. 29. Cited hereafter as AYGC. John Van Seters, in his study of the Abraham tradition, posits a literary tradition of five main stages: Pre-J first stage, pre-J second stage (roughly equivalent to "E"), "J" (late Exilic), "P" (c. 550-540 B.C.), "post-P" (post-exilic), Genesis 14 (c. 300 B.C.) These are not separate documents but growth of the literature with the addition of each subsequent stage. *Abraham in History and Tradition*; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975, p. 310-313 (SAHT). Cf. also the thorough discussion of Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*; NY: Harper & Row, 1965, and Henry O. Thompson, *Approaches to the Bible*; Syracuse: Center for Instructional Communications, Syracuse University, 1967. The latter work is cited hereafter as TAB. Julius Wellhausen's classic statement of the theory was reprinted as a Meridian paperback, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*; NY: World Publishing Co., 1957.

<sup>9</sup>The New Testament Gospel of John, chapter 1, might be considered a fifth concept. Alexander Heidel suggests the Bible teaches creation out of nothing, "creatio ex nihilo." While the concept is heavily debated, he cites Gen. 1, Prov. 8, John 1, Hebrews 11:3, and II Maccabees 7:28 as in agreement with this while nothing in the Bible contradicts it. *The Babylonian Genesis*, 2nd ed.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963. Others suggest that II Macc. 7:28 is the earliest certain expression of this concept. Cf. William A. Irwin, "Creation," pp. 186-188 in *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hastings, rev. ed., ed. Frederick C. Grant and M.M. Rowley; NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963.

<sup>10</sup>Ephraim A. Speiser notes the problems and then dates the chapter to the 18th century B.C. based on the aliveness of the tradition and historical references. *Genesis (The Anchor Bible)*; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1964, pp. 99-109. Cited hereafter as SGAB. In Contrast, SAHT—112-120, 296-308, 310-313, considers Genesis 14 to date to c. 300 B.C.

<sup>11</sup>Otto J. Baab, *The Theology of the Old Testament*; NY: Abingdon Press, 1949, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup>*The Old Testament and Theology*; NY: Harper & Row, 1969, pp. 74-81. Cited hereafter as WOTT.

<sup>13</sup>MOTT—52. James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955, pp. 129-142. Cited hereafter as ANET.

<sup>14</sup>In one strand, God makes things. In another, he speaks "and it was so." On the theory that the more anthropomorphic concept of God is older, the former is the more ancient strand. The oscillation between creation by word and action is found in Egyptian texts dating from the third millennium B.C. ANET—6. Creation by word is suggested in Psalm 148:3-5, where all things are called on to praise the Lord for he commanded and they were created. Ps. 33:6-9 says the earth should fear the Lord for this same reason. The concept of making/maker is repeated in Gen. 14:19, Ps. 95:5, Jonah 1:9, etc.

<sup>15</sup>Prov. 8:24 notes that wisdom existed before the depths, "tehomot." Cf. ETOT II:102.

<sup>16</sup>Jared J. Jackson, "The Deep," IDB 1:813-814. *The Legends of Genesis*; NY: Schocken Books, 1964 (original 1901), p. 149. Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant*; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969, p. 158. Hillers is cited hereafter as HCHBI. The Yahwist with his concept of a cosmic God who created humanity could equally be called a universalist. In contrast to a narrow sectarian view, Jakob Jocz sees the entire Old Testament as universalistic. See further later. *The Covenant: A Theology of Human Destiny*; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans' Co., 1968. Cited hereafter as JJC.

<sup>17</sup>MTOT—187. Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*; Cardiff: University of Wales, 1967.

<sup>18</sup>Martin Buber observed this cosmic dimension in *The Prophetic Faith*; NY: Macmillan, 1949, pp. 8-10. James D. Martin, *The Book of Judges*; Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 52-76. Robert G. Boling, *Judges*; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1975, pp. 101-120. Norman K. Gottwald, "Poetry, Hebrew," IDB 3: 829-838. Frank M. Cross and David N. Freedman, "The Song of Miriam," JNES 14 (1955), 237-250.

<sup>19</sup>William Foxwell Albright, *The Biblical Period from Abraham to*

Ezra; NY: Harper & Row, 1963, and, AYG. John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972. G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, 2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961. Roland de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel*; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978. ANET. SGAB.

<sup>20</sup>*Understanding the Old Testament*, 2nd ed.; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966, p. 382. Cited hereafter as AUOT. AYG—69, n. 69 emphasizes the continuance of oral tradition even after the Yahwist wrote his epic.

<sup>21</sup>R.J. Thompson, op. cit., pp. 146-149. George Widengren, *Literary and Psychological Aspects of the Hebrew Prophets*; Uppsala: On oral tradition, cf. further TAB—22-28. Ronald E. Clements, *Abraham and David: Genesis XV and its Meaning for Israelite Tradition*; London: SCM Press, 1967, p. 35, n. 1. Eduard Nielsen, *Oral Tradition*; London: SCM Press, 1954. Sigmund Mowinckel, "Tradition, Oral," IDB 4:683-685. Robert C. Culley, ed., *Oral Tradition and Old Testament Studies* (Semeia 5); Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1976. Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965.

<sup>22</sup>Whitley, op. Cit., p. 48, says the Ten Commandments were created by the Deuteronomist, c. 650 B.C.

<sup>23</sup>H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament*; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup>AUOT—384-390.

<sup>25</sup>Anderson, IDB 1:727.

<sup>26</sup>*Divine Principle*, 2nd ed.; NY: The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1973, pp. 137 and 402.

<sup>27</sup>"Dispensation" comes from the Latin "dispenso." It means to weight out or administer as a steward. It's also a system established by God to regulate obedience to him, e.g., the Mosaic dispensation. Cf. Alan Richardson, ed., *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969, p. 97. Van A. Harvey notes the name is from an English word used to translate the Greek "oikonomia which appears four times in the New Testament, though only once with the connotation of time. Some groups list dispensations of innocence, conscience, civil government, promise, law, grace and the Kingdom. Each dispensation or "time" is characterized by unique duties and responsibilities.

The Covenant with Noah is one example. The Covenant through Christe is another. *A Handbook of Theological Terms*; NY: MacMillan, 1964. Dewey M. Beegle reviews the history of dispensationalism and dispensational systems in his, *Prophecy and Prediction*; Ann Arbor: Pryor Pettengill, 1978, pp. 157-191.

<sup>28</sup>HCHBI—158. Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 73. He notes Jer. 33:20-26 which says that God has a covenant with day and night. The word "berith" is used here.

<sup>29</sup>Romans 11:32. Cf. Ronald Goetz, "Grace Unlimited," *The Christian Century* LXVII, No. 38 (26 Nov 80), 1149-1150. *The Century* is cited hereafter as CC. ETOT I:414. VRG—130.

<sup>30</sup>JJC—33.

<sup>31</sup>Ephraim A. Speiser, "Mesopotamian Motifs in the early Chapters of Genesis," *Expedition* 5 (1962), 19, SGAB—LVII.

<sup>32</sup>ANET—37-109.

<sup>33</sup>The exact date for the development of pure or theoretical or philosophical monotheism in Israel is still debated. Some suggest Second Isaiah while others say Amos. The monotheism of Moses was a practical monotheism or what William F. Albright called empirico-logical monotheism. Without explicitly denying the existence of other gods, this earlier mono-Yahwism called for the worship of Yahweh to the exclusion of all other deities. *From the Stone Age to Christianity*; Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1957. MTOT—78, says monotheism in Israel is incontrovertible. But if we must distinguish between practical and theoretical monotheism, most of the Old Testament exhibits practical monotheism. I would add that the latter is true for much of the so-called monotheistic religions today.

<sup>34</sup>JJC—231.

<sup>35</sup>*Maker of Heaven & Earth*; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1965, pp. 4-7, 83-85.

<sup>36</sup>Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975, pp. 98-100.

<sup>37</sup>JJC—332. Panentheism is a different matter. A transcendent God includes the transient and both influences and is influenced by it. This view is especially associated with Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) and Charles Hartshorne. Cf. Harvey, op. cit., p. 172. Without calling it panentheism, Walter Brueggeman

speaks of a God who embraces and is transformed by those who are embraced. "Covenant as a subversive Paradigm," CC XC (12 Nov 80), 1094-1099.

<sup>37</sup>A Davis, op. cit., pp. 30-35.

<sup>38</sup>ETOT II:98. Eichrodt also warns against dualism such as the ancient Near Eastern concept of eternal matter, an ideal propagated today by some modern science. He goes on to point out that the Old Testament also escaped deism (ETOT II:161-162) in which God creates and then leaves it all behind. God is external to the world as its Creator but in the world in a covenant relationship which is eternal. Karl Barth says God created out of love. It would be strange love to create and then withdraw. He sees creation as the external basis of the covenant and the covenant as the internal basis of creation. *The Doctrine of Creation (Church Dogmatics, III, 1)*; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958, pp. 94-329.

<sup>39</sup>*Why the Green Nigger?: Re-Mything Genesis*; Wellesley: Roundtable Press, 1979, pp. 144-146.

<sup>40</sup>Fleming Hvidberg claims Gen. 1-3 is the story of Ba'al vs. Yahweh. The snake is Ba'al, the devil, as in Ba'alzebub, "the lord of the flies" (II Kings 1:2; Beelzebub, Matthew 10:25). "The Canaanite Background of Genesis 1-3," *Vetus Testamentum* 10 (1960), 285-294. John L. McKenzie sees Gen. 2-3 in a similar way. "The Literary Characteristics of Genesis 2-3," *Theological Studies* 15 (1954), 541-572. Fertility is a very prominent theme in the Bible. MTOT—142-143.

<sup>41</sup>There is such an emphasis. The word for covenant, "berith," is a common name for the circumcision ritual in Judaism today. At times, it was a sign for, or it made the circumcized ones the children of, the covenant. But the origins of the ritual are obscure. It was widely practiced in the ancient world, especially among Semites, including the Canaanites who worshipped Ba'al. The emphasis varied in time, and in importance. Jeremiah speaks of those circumcized in the flesh but not in the heart (9:25-26), and of the circumcized heart (4:4). Leviticus 26:41 uses the uncircumcized heart metaphor. Deuteronomy 10:16 and 30:6 are concerned with the circumcision of the heart, an idea picked up by the Apostle Paul (Rom. 2:29; cf. also Colossians 2:11). The Torah does not command circumcision. Df. J.P. Hyatt, "Circumcision," IDB 1:629-631.

<sup>42</sup>Gray, op. cit. pp. 146-149. Stone, *Should Trees have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects*; Los Altos, Cal.: William Kaufman, 1974.

<sup>43</sup>pp. 46-74, in *The American Society of Christian Ethics, 1979, Selected Papers from the Twentieth Annual Meeting*, ed. Max L. Stackhouse: Newton Centre: ASCE, 1979. He is following Walter Brueggemann, *The Land*; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977, and, W.D. Davies, op. cit.

<sup>44</sup>JJC—235. ETOT II:153.

<sup>45</sup>G.E. Wright, *The God Who Acts*, op. cit.

<sup>46</sup>JJC—295. Note the similar concern for the inter-relationships of people and all life and the earth in Indian thought in the papers in Section C, earlier in this volume.

<sup>47</sup>WOTT—72. Lynn White, "Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155, No. 3767 (Mar 67), 1203-1207. Arnold J. Toynbee, "The Genesis of Pollution," *The Readers Digest* (Dec 73), 124-125.

<sup>48</sup>Reported by Elsie Thomas Culver, "The Earl Lectures at Berkeley," CC LXXXIII, no. 16 (16 Mar 66), 346-348.

<sup>49</sup>Nuclear energy has given an interesting speculation on how God created the world. It's the reverse of  $E=mc^2$  in which God took his energy and compressed it into matter. Atomic energy is the reverse—matter is changed into energy.

<sup>49A</sup>Op. cit.

<sup>50</sup>The psalms are notoriously difficult to date. ETOT II:120, 151, 155, claims Ps. 8 is ancient and that its formulation is independent of Gen. 1, and prior to it as are Ps. 19a and 29.

<sup>51</sup>WOTT—94.

<sup>52</sup>ETOT II:122-125, notes the original concrete nature of the image. God is in human form or human form is a copy of the divine form. Seth is in his father Adam's image in Gen. 5:3. The divine-human correlation is common in the ancient Near East. It is worth noting that this is not the same conception as the taunt, "man makes his gods in his own image." The biblical conception is the exact reverse. Otto Baab sees the image as a matter of authority. Where God has authority over all creation, man is given authority over all the earth. Op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>53</sup>JJC—34-37. Harvey, op. cit. pp. 65, 157. Richardson, op. cit., p. 226. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingston, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1974. ETOT I:159. J.P. Hyatt suggests a natural law context for Jeremiah's reverence (33:20-26) to God's covenant with the day and night. "Introduction" to the Book of Jeremiah, IB 5:1052. George F. Moore. *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, Vol. I; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927, pp. 274-275.

<sup>54</sup>"The Inclusive Covenant and Special Covenants," pp. 95-116 in Stackhouse, op. cit. ETOT II:127.

<sup>55</sup>Moore, op. cit., p. 478. He's quoting IV Esdras 54:19. Traditionally there were six commands revealed to Adam, but Moore, p. 474, notes that "sin began with Adam. Only a single commandment—a prohibition—was laid upon him, and he transgressed it." This brought death to all the world (IV Esdras 3:7). The Wisdom of Solomon (2:23-24) blamed it on the devil. But note that individual responsibility is also part of the picture.

<sup>56</sup>Anderson, *The Beginning of History*; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965, p. 96.

<sup>57</sup>Latin "foeder, foedus," "league, compact." Cf. Latin "fides," "faith." Harvey, op. cit. Richardson, op. cit. Cross and Livingston, op. cit. Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*; NY: Harper & Brothers, 1953, pp. 814, 821. Herbert W. Richardson, "A Brief Outline of Unification Theology," pp. 135-140 in *A Time for Consideration*, ed. M. Darrol Bryant and Herbert W. Richardson; NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1978. JJC—99-101.

<sup>58</sup>"Introduction," pp. vii-xvi (cp. p. xv), *The Meaning of the City* by Jacques Ellul; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970.

<sup>59</sup>MTOT—160.

<sup>60</sup>Ellul, op. cit., p. 1 ff.

<sup>61</sup>Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature*; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968, pp. 7,23, 31.

<sup>62</sup>Samuel Sandmel, *The Hebrew Scriptures*; NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963, p. 353.

<sup>63</sup>ETOT II:128.

<sup>64</sup>*From Faith to Faith*; NY: Harper & Brothers, 1955, p 52. ETOT I:429.

<sup>64A</sup>Brevard S. Childs has suggested that God's remembering is a technical term of the Israelite cult. The priestly school adapted the term to express a theological interpretation of covenant history. *Memory and Tradition in Israel*; Naperville; Alec R. Allenson, 1962.

<sup>65</sup>Baab, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>66</sup>Lewis, op. cit., pp. 186-189.

<sup>67</sup>VRG—127, 129. On deism, cf. also ETOT II:161-162. Harvey, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>68</sup>HCHBI—101-102.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 103-105. Cuthbert A. Simpson, "Exegesis" to the Book of Genesis. IB I:439-829.

<sup>70</sup>VRG—130.

<sup>71</sup>*The Covenant of Grace*; London: The Tyndale Press, 1954.

<sup>72</sup>JJC—58-59. Jacob, op. cit. p. 137. Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*; NY: KTAV Publishing House, 1975.

<sup>73</sup>ETOT I:56-58. Ernst Jenni, "Time," IDB 4:642-649.

<sup>74</sup>MTOT—159.

