TOWARDS
a
GLOBAL CONGRESS
of
WORLD RELIGIONS

Sponsored by
Unification Theological Seminary

Edited by
Warren Lewis

TOWARDS A GLOBAL CONGRESS OF WORLD RELIGIONS

Conference Proceedings at:
San Francisco
Barrytown
Bristol

Sponsored by
Unification Theological Seminary

Edited by
Warren Lewis

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INTRODUCTORY REMARK

The story behind this book is an account of the year-long international, inter-religious correspondence among hundreds of people around the world. Three conferences have been held which mark, like milestones, the growth and development of a proposal to convene a Global Congress of World Religions.

Following the sixth annual International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, held last year in San Francisco, many of the participants in that conference stayed on an extra day to discuss the proposal prepared by the faculty of Unification Theological Seminary, Barrytown, New York (see pp. 28—32). The proceedings of that brief conversation are reported in Section I. The result of the San Francisco discussion, after a tabulation of the critiques, hesitations, and words of warning, was a refinement of the basic proposal. This consensus was reached: It is a good idea to hold a Global Congress of World Religions as soon as is feasible, to provide a universal forum in which representative religious hearts and minds may clarify the common issues of life and reality of global humanity. There was a constant affirmation of the value and healthiness of religious pluralism and, at the same time, a sense of common human religious community. Words such as interdependence, coexistence, mutual supplementarity, a symphony and a stew, and unification of heart were used to describe the possibility of concerted action. No one spoke in favor of organizational or doctrinal unity.

As a result of these deliberations, a Conference on Contemporary African Religion was held at Barrytown (Section II) and a second Conference on Contemporary African Religion was held at Bristol, England (Section III). These two conferences basically discussed the potential and difficulties of calling together a meeting of African religions on African soil.

Each of the three conferences was attended by outstanding intellectual and religious leaders in the disciplines of the natural sciences, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, political theory, Black and African studies, and theology, as well as organizers in the field of worldwide inter-religious dialogue. At all three conferences, many individual offers of further cooperation were made to widen the network of communicants in the preparation of the Global Congress.

The Unification Theological Seminary at Barrytown (founded by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon as a school of graduate study for the leaders of the Unification Movement) has taken the lead thus far in calling for the convocation of the Global Congress. The Seminary is presently exploring with other institutions of like purpose the possibilities of collegial co-sponsorship of the Global Congress. Plans are being made to facilitate the communication among common-interest organizations around the world involved in inter-religious dialogue which, to date, have tended to pursue their individual tasks without thorough awareness of one another's activity.

A final word about this volume: shortness of time and oceanic distances have dictated publication under difficult conditions. Because we wanted this volume ready in time for our next gathering following the seventh annual International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences in Boston, we have decided to allow publication of a less-than-perfect volume: there are misspelled technical terms and names—Professor Gyekye's paper is unfortunately devoid of the footnotes which belong to it—and some conference participants have not had the opportunity to proof-read their respective contributions.

We, the faculty of Unification Theological Seminary, invite you as a reader of this book to correspond with us regarding the proposal discussed within these pages. We dedicate these published proceedings to the spirit of the 1893 Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago, and to the memory of Sir Francis Younghusband.

Warren Lewis
for the Faculty
Unification Theological Seminary
Barrytown, New York
Thanksgiving, 1978

SAN FRANCISCO

Participants airing their views on the proposal for a Global Congress.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE TOWARDS A GLOBAL CONGRESS OF WORLD RELIGIONS

Sunday Afternoon Session
November 27, 1977

Warren Lewis (Professor of Church History, Unification Theological Seminary): Honored colleagues and specially invited guests, I begin by congratulating you and thanking you for arriving. My name is Warren Lewis. I am a professor of Church History at Unification Theological Seminary, and I also do sometimes profess various things at New York Theological Seminary. Today I am representing the faculty of Unification Theological Seminary from Barrytown, New York.

I must say why Ninian Smart is not with us, although he was promised you in advance publications. Ninian is recovering from a bout with hepatitis, and had to undergo some tests this week. He was scheduled to be with the ICUS, and then to spend this afternoon and tomorrow morning with us. We're sorry he's sick and glad to say he's getting better.

I hope that most of you have already received copies of the proposal which was prepared by the Unification Theological Seminary. We are not going to discuss it directly this afternoon. There will be a brainstorming session and a discussion of this proposal and any others tomorrow morning from nine to twelve. Let me request that if you have not yet received the proposal, pick one up from the table by the door. Many of you will not be able to be with us tomorrow morning because you have pressing responsibilities elsewhere or important preferences. If you have things that need to be said, communicate them to someone who can fairly represent you, who will be here tomorrow; in that way, you'll be with us, even though you had to leave. Please read the proposal tonight, come back tomorrow morning, prepared to roll up your sleeves, and participate in not just another conference but an actual work session as we clarify ideas and lay concrete plans which, if possible, will be expressive of some kind of consensus.

I have had rather lengthy conversations with a number of you during the week, and I already know some things to tell you that we are *not* proposing. We are not, for example, proposing the foundation of a new, lowest-common-denominator religion processed in a bureaucratic blender to pour forth a kind of religious split-pea soup. I choose not to make use of the old American metaphor of melting-pot. We are not interested in *Kulturreligion.* Maybe the metaphor of a lamb stew is better than split-pea soup. Maybe what we're talking about is a lamb stew that has the peas and potatoes of Hinduism in it, and the lamb's meat of Islam, and the saffron of Buddhism, and the carrots of Christianity, and who knows what else floating around in what we hope will be a rich sauce. But the potatoes remain potatoes, the carrots are still carrots, and sometimes the lamb's meat is a bit tough to chew. There is a common sauce and a rich gravy, where the stew's flavor is best tasted. Maybe that is what we are talking about. We are talking about an extra-religious gathering of tough-spirited and humble-minded people. We are proposing a religious gathering of intellectuals, of activists, of radicals, of people who have demonstrated through their industriousness and activity, and not simply through their symbolic function, that they are leaders into a common future of us all. The purpose of this Global Congress would be informative and educative; it would be cooperative and confederative to accomplish agreed-upon concrete projects in order to nourish a world that is hungry for hope and life and spirit. I think that I am simply offering my own version of numerous speeches that I heard this week during the ICUS. For I've heard at least a negative consensus in our deliberations: an appeal for an absolute to protect us against absolutisms—a statement that occurred, at least as I heard it, even more frequently than the essential statements of epistemological humility which one expects from scientists of whatever stripe.

Thus it seems to me that this afternoon, above all, is no time for histrionics, for creedalisms, or the preaching of sermons. If we are talking about an ideal, the need for which has come in our time, then we want to cooperate with this universal human trend, this Tao, this providence. If that time has not yet come, then we need not meet again. But we are not here to persuade one another one way or the other. We are here simply to share our opinions and see if we agree.

Whether or not there is life after death was the issue of one conversation this morning. To me, it becomes a question of what to do till the Messiah comes. If your Messiah is heat-death or suffocation by overpopulation or your own individual death is your Messiah, as Lonnie Kliever told us it is his; or if just death itself is the Messiah, as our estimable colleague Richard Rubenstein says; or the Lord of the Second Advent, or Jesus on the clouds, or natural immortality, still it seems to me that whichever one of those denominations you belong to, the common problem of us all is what to do till the Messiah comes. And that is what we have come here to discuss today.

We are not proposing the formation of another dreary conference of bureaucracy. If that seems to be the unavoidable end of the kind of movement we are proposing, we don't want it either. And yet, every time I have heard the possibility of yet another bureaucracy criticized, I have also heard, in the same breath, the expression of hope that, nevertheless, a good organization would be extremely useful at this time. That is what we want, too: a good organization.

And finally, it has to be said that we are talking about an eschatological reality. We are not attempting to do something that has already been done, although there are movements afoot, and historic precedents and people the world over who think as we do. We are, in fact, attempting something that is new, something never attempted before. Robert Bellah is going to tell us about at least one parallel movement in just a moment. But what we are dreaming of, and what we envision, does not yet exist; only the raw materials for it do. As you enter into the discussion this afternoon with Robert Bellah and with us tomorrow in the brainstorming session, I ask you to ask yourself this question from the very beginning: How would I do it if it were my job? If it had been put in your lap to do something about what we have all been talking about all week—the impasse between technology and value, and the troubled future of the human family—what would you do about it? And how would you go about it? For, if you will, it *is* your job; you are the seminal people who have come here today to talk with one another; and, you will be the important people if something comes of this, because you will be the beginners.

Some people think providentially; others move with fate; but I like to say, as fate would have it, providence was with us: this is the place where, in 1945, the Charter for the United Nations was drafted. It seems altogether appropriate that we be here today (and this is just another metaphor) perhaps to deliberate upon a "U.N. of religions."

The man of the hour is Robert Bellah. Robert Bellah needs no introduction to philosophers, social scientists, and theologians. He is well-known to us. He is a sociologist, an acute observer of the patterns of human life. He is a theologian, who recently has caught our attention with a provocative discussion of civil religion. One could almost speak of the "Bellah school", not in a sense that everyone agreed with him, but in a sense that whenever anyone now speaks or writes on the subject, they at least have to make reference to his work, and they talk in his categories. Thirdly, he is a lover of the Orient. As professor at Berkeley, he does his work at the Center for Japanese and Korean Studies. He is well-known on both sides of the Pacific to be one who is sensitive to the coming together both of East and West, as well as North and South. Bob is not going to give a formal paper today. Instead, he's going to chat with us for a little while about religious pluralism, and about the viability of what we have so far called a Global Congress of World Religions. Once he has his brief say, we will have a roundtable discussion. You are free to come to the microphones, state your name, and have at it. We begin with Professor Robert Bellah.

Robert Bellah (Center for Japanese and Korean Studies): Thank you very much, Warren. It is a pleasure to be with you and to welcome those of you from other parts of the country and the world to our beautiful city and our beautiful region. When Warren came to see me some months ago, first posing this extraordinarily exciting, but almost overwhelmingly ambitious idea of somehow bringing the world's religions together to discuss the great issues before us in these closing decades of the twentieth century, I was intrigued, and also, I must admit, skeptical. I would be less than candid if I did not say that I am still intrigued and my skepticism is not wholly gone. There are, however, elements in what he proposed then, elements in the document which many of you have seen, and the rest of you can acquire, which seem to me worthy of very serious consideration, and I would hope that the conversation this afternoon can focus on the intellectual bases, the major thematic issues, and that tomorrow morning's discussion can concern itself more with the pragmatics of how such a thing could be done. In particular, on page 2 of the proposal, the two long paragraphs spell out terribly important issues. I am deeply in sympathy with what is being said here. "The world religions can provide leadership for the new age." I must say I feel that more as a hope than as a statement; the verb is "can." Whether it will "be" or not is another question.

"But in view of international influences now being exercised by the political and industrial segments of our global society," the paragraph goes on to say, "perhaps it is time for international religion to play its role. Religions are uniquely qualified to give ideological direction necessary to bring the human family into healthy wholeness." That is balanced with the next paragraph, which says "if the world religions do not offer this leadership, others will; and the others who will may be motivated by ideological and philosophical commitments which are not only distasteful to religious people but also have within them the seeds of global disaster." I feel that is very much the case. The problem to me is whether the resources of the religions can be brought to bear on the great issues we face in this world in time to prevent the drift towards the brink of the precipice. We are not standing still. We are moving; and, I think we are moving in essentially the direction of disaster. An enterprise which attempts to bring the resources of the great religious traditions of the world together to think about our situation now is certainly one that any sensitive person would want to consider very carefully.

I share with you now a few paragraphs from a paper which I presented at a meeting earlier this month of a group called "The Interreligious Peace Colloquium," in Lisbon, Portugal. That group, though it consisted of only about thirty people, was in a certain sense, a mini-version of what Warren and his group are proposing on a much more ambitious scale. There were Christians, both Protestant and Catholic; Jews, including Israeli Jews; Muslims, including Arab Muslims; and Buddhists from Ceylon and from Japan. There would have been Hindus, if there had not been some last-minute health problems. This group is concerned with bringing the resources of religion to bear on the imminent problems of the new international economic order, with which I think your meetings here this week have been partly concerned. Curiously enough, I performed my task in a room full of not only bishops but actually even one cardinal, and other religious dignitaries. As a mere sociologist, I was the one who was asked to give the theological paper. Whether that says something about the bankruptcy of other forms of theology, I don't know; but I felt quite comfortable.

The real crises of the late-twentieth century seem so overwhelming when we enumerate them, the only response possible seems to be some sort of urgent action. There is the food crisis brought on in part by the rapid expansion of the world's population. There is the energy crisis brought on by the growing recognition of the finite supply of fossil fuels, but more immediately by the rapid increase in the cost of fuel. There are the explosive consequences of the widening gap between the rich and the poor all over the world. There are the political and ultimately military crises that can be seen looming not far off, when the tensions created by food and energy shortages, high prices and high inflation, and the consequent unbearable poverty in large parts of the world result in desperate acts of nations and groups within nations. The contours of these dark possibilities have been sketched by many, and I'm sure no one in this room is unfamiliar with them. During my few minutes here, I can only refer to them. It is natural in the face of such terrifying realities and even more terrifying possibilities for many to say that we cannot afford to spend our time on theological issues. Theology seems awfully remote when people are starving and nuclear war seems ever more likely. "What we need," such voices say, "is action; if we are religious people, our concern ought to be how can we galvanize our faith communities into appropriate action as quickly and effectively as possible!"

I have rather serious doubts, however, as to whether religious communities can be mobilized, as the political scientists use that word, for direct action. As my teacher, and also Warren's teacher, Wilfred Smith, suggested in a recent paper, there are very deep difficulties with the idea of "using" religion to solve problems. Faith, said Wilfred Smith, is man's relation to ultimates, to absolutes; to subordinate faith, or to try to subordinate it to any practical purpose, however worthy, is explosively distorting. He suggested that the use of religion not only undermines faith but also may well distort and even destroy the purpose for which religion is being used. What Smith is telling us is that people of faith must not assume that they know what the "real problems" are, or attempt to use their faith in the solution of them. Faith is radical and ultimate; it speaks to what the real problems are, but only when our action comes from the heart of our faith will it avoid distortion and destruction. We cannot assume that technicians, the experts, have figured out what the problem is, so that all we need to do is harness the energy of religion to solve it. Smith hinted at another aspect of our late twentieth century crisis, to which I would now like to turn.

Overwhelmed by the reality of the crises of food, energy, and poverty, we are tempted to forget that the late twentieth century is also a time of crisis in the minds and souls of men. Even when the problems are clear, it is not the case that we know what to do to solve them. Indeed, many of our assumptions about how to solve our problems have led to actions which have only created new and worse problems. Modernization and development once seemed the panaceas which would quickly bring peace and plenty. Over the last 25 years, massive disillusion has set in with respect to that way of seeking the answer.

But genuine alternatives are, as yet, far from clear. To rush into action without knowing what we are doing, or with ideas that produce just the opposite of what is intended, is not, after all, very panacean. It may be that a pause for reflection, for asking deep, theoretical questions, for assessing the insights which the great theological traditions of the world might have for us would be far more realistic than any precipitate action we can presently think of. Perhaps we are shaken enough in our confidence as modern, technological men and women that a time of listening to traditional religious wisdom would be welcome. But it may be that the overwhelming dominance of modern technical culture, even in the minds of those who are critical of it, makes it very difficult for us to hear what traditional religious wisdom might have to say about our present condition.

Perhaps the only way to understand traditional cultures is to understand modern Western culture, the monoculture that invades all our consciousnesses and that threatens to remake everything in its own image. Or perhaps the two endeavors, to understand traditional culture and the modern West, are really only one after all. Only by seeing modern Western culture in comparative perspective can we understand it or the traditions it everywhere seeks to replace. It is certainly modern culture—which began, of course, with modern Western culture, but is now spilled all over the world—that has unleashed the explosive powers that are changing the world and challenging all traditional religious communities, including Western religious communities.

All individuals with a modern education, which certainly includes everyone in this room, are, in a sense, natives of this modern culture, wherever they may have been born and whatever their religious affiliation. But it is an aspect of the arrogance of modern Western culture that it does not see itself as one culture with its natives alongside other cultures with their natives. Rather, modern Western culture assumes itself to be neutral, objective, scientific. Its highly educated intellectuals are, it is claimed, the first persons in history to have freed themselves from the distortions of myth, superstition, religion, and ideology. All of us here, though we have learned deeply about cultural relativity, have tended to exempt ourselves and our colleagues from that relativity when we are operating within the framework of serious intellectual reflection. It is for reasons like this, I think, it is so hard for us, even with the best will in the world, to hear what religion might have to say to us in these days in which we live.

Some of the chief components of this ideology of the modern West make it difficult for religion to be heard. To define the ideology of the modern West, or more specifically, modern Western intellectuals, is a daunting undertaking; but, with the help of E. F. Schumacher and Louis Dumont, I will make the attempt. Schumacher neatly sums up modern ideology with the following terms: positivism, the belief that valid knowledge can be attained only through methods of the natural sciences; relativism, the belief that there can be no valid objective knowledge about ends or norms or values; reductionism, the belief that all the higher manifestations of human life such as religion, philosophy, art, and so forth, are nothing but disguised expressions of class interests, libidinal energies, or other so-called "real determinants;" and evolutionism, as based on competition, natural selection, and the survival of the fittest.

Louis Dumont, with other problems in mind, emphasizes different, but related, points. For modern ideology, the individual human being, rather than society, bears the basic and ultimate value, and the relation of man to objects, to things, is more valued than the relations between men. Because, as Dumont recognizes, for modern man, everything is knowable by natural science's methods, which is the same thing as what Schumacher calls positivism. The individual, considered even as a moral individual, is basically the biological individual, with his needs, desires, and fears; and nature is basically the disenchanted nature of modern physics. Man may have a psychological self, but he cannot have a soul; for that would imply that he stands in correlation with an ultimate reality of which modern ideology knows nothing. Nature, similarly, is mere matter and cannot be a cosmos, which would again imply a context of ultimate meaning, of which positivist modern ideology has no knowledge. Dumont is also helpful in spelling out for us the implication of Schumacher's term "relativism," when he says that modern man knows what he is doing, but not what it is really about.

In the modern world, says Dumont, each of our particular viewpoints does not know very well what it is about or the reasons for its existence. Just as our rationality is mostly a matter of relation between means and ends, while the hierarchy of ends is left out, so also our rationality manifests itself in each of our neatly distinct compartments, but not in their distribution, definition, and arrangement. I'm sure that any group that has been concerned with the unity of science knows how far that unity is from an experienced reality.

Here Dumont is close to Wilfred Smith, when he complained of modern man's tendency to separate all the various parts of life and deal with them piecemeal, as merely presenting technical problems. This standard way of dealing with issues has the result, according to Smith, of leaving out the fundamental questions and ignoring religion. Again, to quote Wilfred Smith, "these objectificationist trends also mean that the fundamentally human questions as to what sort of person one is or shall become or what overall vision deserves one's loyalty, were hardly incorporated into the model. In this scheme, the religion tended to be seen as just one more factor in the social complex, although it was tacitly recognized as being different from the others, at least by the consensus that it was to be left alone, whether because it did not really matter or because it was too unmanageable." In general, as Smith implies, when the modern intellectual has to deal with religion, there is embarrassment; there is really no place for religion in the structure of modern ideology, yet religion remains a social force, even in the West. There are also moments when one does have to say something about ends, and one turns to religion, embarrassment and all, for there is nowhere else to turn.

But for many reasons, which should be obvious to people in this room, doubts have arisen in the very heartland of modern ideology. As Louis Dumont puts it, we are witnessing a crisis of the modern ideological paradigm. It is true that the tendency to see crises everywhere is strong in modern ideology, and that if crisis there be, it was not born yesterday, but has been there for quite some time. Yet, the twentieth-century crisis of the paradigm of modernity has recently gone through an intensification, a deepening and a generalization. Modern ideology and its social and scientific correlates, far from solving all the age-old problems of humankind, seem to have created a whole series of difficulties wholly unforeseen by the traditional cultures.

This being the case, it is well to remember that modern ideology did not spring chastely into the world from the head of Zeus, but was born at a particular time and place, with tremendous polemic intent, with powerful political, economic, and religious (though masquerading as anti-religious) ends in view. And it has never succeeded, even in its heartland, in replacing the older traditions that it opposed. If it dominates all of us modern, educated individuals beyond our imagining, it is also true that for none of us does it supply our total and true picture of the world, for it cannot. All of us, consciously or not, must live, in part, by ends, symbols, myths, plucked from the great storehouse of traditional religions. Otherwise, we could not live at all.

But if we are to turn to the religions of mankind for some instruction, in this paradigm of modernity, we are immediately faced with a grave difficulty—there is no such thing as traditional religion or traditional culture as such. The great traditional religions are as different from one another, from many points of view, as they are from the modern West. We would be foolish to overlook or deny the diversity and even conflict between the religions. At a high enough level of generality, the great religious traditions all do contrast with some of the most fundamental assumptions of modern Western ideology. None of them could adequately be characterized by the terms: positivism, relativism, reductionism and competitive evolutionism. None of them is radically individualistic in the modern sense and none of them believes the relation of man to material things is more important than the relation of man to man. But diversity is of the nature of the case in the religious tradition and we must face that issue head on before we can see how the traditional religions can instruct us in our modern plight. I am delighted that in Warren's introductory remarks, however extreme that culinary metaphor was, he is concerned to keep the carrots as carrots, and not blend everything into a homogenized mush, because that runs absolutely against the whole experience of the human race with religion.

There is another thing we have to remember if we turn to religion, speaking in answer to the lapse of the self-confidence of the modern paradigm: religion operates not through the direct manipulation of political power, but through the interpretation and application of symbols. We cannot view religious communities as political bodies, so that we simply need to find the bureaucrat in charge to bring them all together. Here, again, I applaud Warren's caution in that regard. It is the nature of the symbolic process so crucial to the way religion operates that helps us to understand why religion remains so close to the very texture of social life. Political power can affect millions of people externally through force, intimidation, or simply the rule of law. But there are limits to the externality of political power. That is one of the reasons political power always turns to religion for some kind of legitimation.

Politics can often operate externally, whereas religion cannot. The reason is that religious symbols must be internalized in the faithful, if they are to be operative; and when they are internalized, they are interpreted with all the particularities of time and space that exist in the lives of the faithful. It cannot be otherwise. If religious symbols are to be effective, they must touch people close to their deepest feelings. But their deepest feelings are inevitably bound up with feelings of family, locality, language, ethnic group, and race. So, again, there is the indelible plurality that we can never overlook when we are thinking about religion in relation to our problem. But it is also important to remember that religion is not static, that religion changes, that new religious movements occur, that new figures embody religious truth, and become paradigms for others, that new groups in their collective life give an example which might possibly be followed by larger social entities. By offering new symbols, or reinterpreting old ones, religious movements change the symbolic climate of whole cultures. We are used to thinking of change in economic and political terms, but it is symbolic change that goes the deepest and lasts the longest.

If we are to surmount the great crises of the late-twentieth century, symbolic transformation must be part of the process. It is possible that traditional religion freshly embodied in individuals and groups may provide much of that symbolic transformation which may deflect us from the fatal course upon which modern ideology has embarked us. But, again, I think those reflections give us pause in imagining how much can be achieved by bringing together groups of religious intellectuals, even including religious activists who are themselves involved in making their religious life come true. Religion is not something legislated from above. It is something that lives and pulses in the hearts and minds of religious individuals and religious groups, sometimes very small groups.

How, then, to relate, how even to discern and discover where real religious vitality is in a world which is often so much more interested in other things would be one of the tasks of any coming together of religious persons concerned with the problem of how religion can speak to our needs in this period of great turmoil, great danger, and also great possibilities in the world. The religious communities of the world are divided and most of them are not very well organized. If one were looking to them with an eye to political mobilization, one would certainly be discouraged. In many parts of the world, the religious communities are still reeling from the intellectual and ethical critique of modern ideology, which is as much to be found in the liberal philosophies of the West (I'm using that term in its philosophical, and not its contemporary, political meaning) as in the Marxist philosophies of another segment of the world. Many of the ablest intellectuals and young leaders have abandoned religion and espouse secular causes that derive from the basic premises of modern Western ideology. Yet the religious traditions remain the guardians of the deepest truths men have discovered and the still small voices are to be heard everywhere by those who would listen.

Perhaps the most important task for a Congress of the World Religions would be to listen and to discern, as far as possible, what the world is saying to us, and what the religiously-inspired are saying in return.

[Robert Bellah then proposed a round of discussion]

Ben-Ami Sharfstein (Professor of Philosophy, Tel-Aviv University): My name is Sharfstein. I hope this enterprise that's being suggested will not be quixotic, but I think that the task of being cautious, judicious, and slow which you've outlined is extraordinarily difficult, and that the demands on generosity that we're making and on mutual self-esteem, are in fact, unexampled in the history of any large group of the world. I want to illustrate what difficulties arise for pluralism out of our own text and out of the text that was given to us to pursue. There is a tendency for us to personify and discover devils who don't deserve to be devils. One of them might be, for example, your choice or Dumont's of relativism. I think we should remember that our whole enterprise here depends on the relativism certainly of some sociologists and anthropologists that make it possible for us to have this mutual self-esteem. If our example, let's say, of a materialist is a man such as Santayana, we are reading out of our enterprise a man who is intensely sensitive to human values of all sorts; and if our examples of the reductionist is a man such as Freud, we read out of our company a man with the deepest and most intense kind of desire to help us realistically. To be cautious and slow and generally pluralistic, we have to admit anyone who is humane enough into our company.

Mary Carmen Rose (Chairman, Department of Philosophy, Goucher College, Towson, Maryland): I'm going to talk about relativism first. Our friends who are the relativists and the positivists would eschew classical views, and yet positivism and relativism come right out of Western classical thought. As Charles Malik said, there really isn't anything new about positivism and relativism. And, as a matter of fact, some decades ago, when language analysis moved into this country, they claimed to have roots in Greek skepticism. C.S. Lewis said it very well when he said that the devil gave us the Sophists, but it was God who gave us Socrates. Now, I think that's very true and that it's true is my life's commitment. There is something interesting about the Socratic position, and whenever it returns, it always saves the goal. I think Mr. Sharfstein was saving some goal of relativism. But relativism has to reject people, like the rest of us, and I think we've seen this in this ICUS conference. Even when those of us who do speak up for absolute values are not heard, I hope that we, who believe in them, can be very eager to save the goal of relativism and positivism. There seems to be an overview here—the relativists and positivists since the days of Socrates have attacked those of us who believe in absolute values, as Socrates did. It's always the people whom I call the ontological realists, like Socrates, who point out the goal and lead on to a new position. And I think we stand on such a threshold today. It is going to take extraordinary creativity, but we must have faith that we will do it.

Robert Bellah: I just simply have to say something after that, because I so strongly agree with your example of Socrates, who was instructed really in both directions. Socrates is never so sharp or so amusing as when faced with a dogmatist who thinks not only that he has absolute values, but knows exactly what they are and what they mean. Such people are reduced to shreds and tatters by Socrates. On the other hand, you're absolutely right that he was locked in a bitter combat with positivists and relativists of his day who were, indeed, the Sophists. My own sense is that the greatest modern social scientists, certainly including Freud, are not ultimately relativists at all, but are those spending an enormous amount of energy and profound concern finding out what is the objective basis for human meaning and human value. But I would certainly agree with Mr. Sharfstein, that we want many ways of posing the issue, and we don't want to have a little man at the gate who says: "Oh, you are a positivist and they won't let you in." Openness to anybody who is concerned with the issues that are being posed seems essential to me in preference to any kind of dogmatic, exclusive policy. I'm sure Warren Lewis and his group would share that view.

Lonnie Kliever (Professor of Religion, Southern Methodist University): My name is Lonnie Kliever, and I'd like you to talk a bit more and comment on how the envisioned conference might have a bearing on the symbolic change that you call for. Would the symbolic change become influential and operative through the delegates, or in what other ways?

Robert Bellah: I was really suggesting that symbolic change doesn't happen in formal meetings. If we sat down even with the brightest intellectuals of all the traditions and said, "Now what do we really need to have a symbolic transformation in the world?" and continued the Congress all summer, I dread to think what the consequences would be. Living symbols come out of lived experience, not out of the kinds of deliberations that congresses foster. What they can do is to discern and share collectively their discernments as to what is significant in the worlds which they know best, and what may be the sources of new life that are emerging. As I suggested, those still small voices have it so hard to make themselves heard. Not in any sense would such a group itself effect symbolic change.

Emmanuel G. Mesthene (Professor of Philosophy, Rutgers University): As I was listening to your opening remarks, I thought I was hearing the script of a Western, in which religion is the hero and modernity is the villain. If the villain would only repent and follow the example of the hero, then he might be saved. I sense a hypostatization of religion in the way you formulate it. Specifically you talk about traditional religion, and I certainly would like to get a sense of what, in your view, that is.

At the same time as you talk about an appeal to traditional religion, you also talk about symbolic change to go along with economic change or social change. Is the problem really to put traditional religion in a modern situation in an adversary relationship, or is not the problem to find new religious formulations which are perhaps more appropriate to our time than are some of the older formulations that somehow no longer seem appropriate to our time?

Robert Moon (Professor of Nuclear Physics, University of Chicago): I appreciate very much your remark that faith is man's relation to the absolute. In the sciences, we are busy trying to describe the measure of the world the good Lord has given us; and in so doing, we are not really trying to aim at any goal other than to have an accurate description and, from this, arrive at many other things, like technology. But it's real joy doing it, and there's a joy of experiencing this creation of our Maker. There is, further, a need for absolute standards in physics, and we have them; we can only reach them in a certain amount. Absolute standards of honesty are very important in physics, in any science; absolute purity, that we do a thing because it is right; and being unselfish, trying to do God's will, trying to find out His guidance. Many of my friends do this in the sciences. Then there's the idea of absolute love; for those who are Christians, who seek God, Christ really is an absolute standard, a beatific vision for those who are pure, and for the holy, and for those who serve. Based on this, I think, a great deal of science is going ahead today. It doesn't claim to have answers nor, as you indicated, does it want to put faith as a need. Faith works through us to reach this description of the great world and universe that God has given us.

Archie Bahm (Professor of Philosophy, University of New Mexico): I have spent a considerable amount of my life studying and teaching comparative religions. I too, like the speaker before the last one, wanted to raise questions about the continuing reference to traditional religions; we seem almost to have the impression that all religions are traditional religions. But let us recall that all of the world's major religions originated in particular times from particular needs. Now we are in another time and with another set of needs. Now, instead of recalling solutions to previous needs and previous times, do we not now need a new religion, one that grows out of our own needs, and is responsive to our own needs? This is not a repudiation of religion; it's a recognition that the religions have become obsolete, that we have too much obsolescence in our so-called traditional religions. The time has come to remove that obsolescence as much as we can. There are those who identify religion with their traditional forms, such that anyone who goes against those traditional forms or doctrines is thought to be somehow anti-religious. In my view, this is a mistake. We have our own religious needs, and we can get clues to our needs from megalopolitan and global needs instead of going back to the nomads, the city-state and medieval times. We need a new religion! A further suggestion is, not that we call a Congress of the traditional religions, but rather set about using, what shall we say, scientific methods to try to understand what our contemporary needs are, and what kind of religion we need, and then proceed to develop it insofar as we can. Thank you.

Robert Bellah: I'm glad to see there's a great deal of diversity here, because that view could not be further from my own. It also would certainly eliminate the purpose of this discussion, because the last thing that a group of representatives of the existing religions would want to do is to start a new one. (Laughter) But the issues as posed by the last speaker are certainly serious ones that we would have to think about.

James Deotis Roberts (Professor of Religion, Howard University): If we have this Congress of religions, it should become a dialogue in which a recognition of the riches of cultures in the East and South should become a real part. I can conceive of a serious problem for some Christian theologians who enter into the dialogue on the basis of a limited understanding of revelation because they have a very evangelical and missionary thrust to want to convert everybody else. Now we all want to be able to maintain our missionary zeal, but certainly we also want to be open enough to do some creative listening towards all quarters. I think if we go into this seriously, we will find that there are other ways of thinking than Western ways of thinking. For example, Dr. Nakamura's book on ways of thinking of Eastern people—the way Indians, Japanese, Tibetans and others think—has something to say to us. Other ways of thinking mean other ways of believing. Moreover, if we look into the African religions, we will overcome much of the dichotomy, that comes out in professors like Smith, between faith and practice; in Africa, there is a holistic understanding of religion as embracing all of life. So I think we could learn a great deal if we were to open up in this way and create a climate in which we could really enjoy truly creative dialogue from all segments of humanity, and not just between those in the Northern-land community. Those in Asia, and certainly including the Africans, as well as Latin-Americans, and also those in the islands of the sea—the whole human family—have so much to teach us. I've taught in the field of comparative religions, and I know in all textbooks that are the main textbooks, when we begin to talk about the "major religions," we leave out the African religions and other significant belief systems in the human family. I hope that we can correct this, whatever we do in this conversation.

Richard Rubenstein (Professor of Religion, Florida State University): My name is Richard Rubenstein and I am going to suggest that, as much as we might want to reaffirm the traditional religions, our very presence with each other indicates that, in a Hegelian term, the situation of the traditional religions is "aufgehoben". That is, they have become part of our situation and are sublated into some new reality. Let me give you two examples of what I mean. As some of you know, I am very interested in the Unification Church, without agreeing with its theology. But look what happened. American Presbyterian missionaries went to Korea, and they founded a very strong Presbyterian Church. Out of that experience, the Reverend Moon had the experience of the direct contact, direct revelation from Jesus. This has impelled him both, not only in Asia and Korea and in Japan but also in the United States, to take what he was given and to transform it into something which is related to what he was given, but is something which represents dialectically a growth beyond what he was given. That's one example that I can give. Another example is when I think of the horizon of my grandfather; the horizon of my grandfather was a very simple one. There were Jews, and they studied the truth in the Bible; not just the Bible, but the Bible as it was interpreted in rabbinical commentaries. And then there was the rest of the world, all of whom were lumped into one category, and that category, politely, was "the Gentiles," the nations. Now, it's impossible for any of us to have that kind of horizon. I'm aware of the fact that my grandfather's division, dichotomization of the world, was not just true of him; it was true of people in other traditions as well. The fact that we can gather here and the fact that in my own community I'm always aware not of "Gentiles" on the horizons, but of religious options and religious affirmations which are constantly transforming me, as I am transforming them, indicate that if there is to be a World Congress of Religions, we have to allow for more than the simple possibility that each will be heard. It will be part of a continuing transformative process. Technology isn't just a creation of instruments to do what had been done. The tool transforms the tool user. And by our coming together, we will be transformed; let us make no mistake about it.

Robert Bellah: Just to clarify my use of the word "tradition," I think any living tradition is in a continuous process of self-transformation. If it ceases to transform itself, it ceases to be a living tradition, and becomes a mere relic of some sort. So I did not mean to pose an artificial opposition between new developments in religion and some static notion of traditional religion. But I used the word "traditional" only to point out that most religions, including most new religions, are rooted in a sense of continuity. They have a sense of human historical experience that goes well back before the experience of modernity; and they value that earlier experience as having provided some very important reference points for continuing human life. I must say that I'm speaking of my own life as a member of the sociology department at Berkeley, in the midst of what I'm calling "modern ideology." If you think I'm making up bugaboos, you should come and spend a few days with me at my school. Basically, many of my students feel that there's nothing of value there at all. Perhaps an extreme example of that was something I heard at a neighboring institution, near Berkeley, where some undergraduates went to the dean to complain about a sociology course in which the teacher was assigning readings written earlier than 1970. (Laughter) Obviously, anything written earlier than 1970 is out of date. God forbid if that sociology professor had assigned Plato's *Republic*, (laughter) which, in my view, is one of the greatest pieces of sociology ever written. The attitude that the totality of human experience, including the experience of Africa, Native America, as well as the great literary traditions, has nothing to say to us is more widespread, perhaps, than people in this room realize. To me, the value of an enterprise such as the one being proposed here is that it does not argue that there's some prefabricated past, some perfect moment, some 13th-century ideal, which needs simply to be put into practice. Some who participate in this proposed event might, however, argue for a golden age or a blue print utopia. But that, it seems to me, is hopelessly retrograde, and the entire modern critique of religion can be rapidly brought to bear upon it. But that traditions, with their multiple self-transformations, can speak to us seems to me a reality and a potential which such an enterprise might begin to show. And with respect to Rubenstein's point, the enterprise itself, if it succeeded even a little, would itself be transforming. The people who came to it would not be the same when they left it. And the repercussions and the ripples from such a meeting would affect all the communities to which they return. So the dialectic between our present condition, which demands things of a tradition which that tradition has never faced before, and what that tradition might have to say to us is the kind of dialectic which hopefully would be inspired by such an enterprise. This kind of dialectic cannot be produced through a fundamentalistic picking up of a text as though "it speaks for itself," but rather requires interpretation from the midst of the struggles and realities of "now." But if the enterprise were to turn into a collective admiration society of how beautiful our antique traditions are, then I think we might as well forget it right now.

Ali A. Mazrui (Professor of Political Science, University of Michigan): I don't know whether it's correct to say that there hasn't been the birth of a major world religion in a thousand years, but there's been an interval of more than a thousand years since Islam, the youngest religion that has spread across many societies, came into existence. The question arises, why there hasn't been the birth of any major, new, world religion in such a relatively long time. Before that, the variety was impressive; and given variety, three forms of response presumably are relevant: first, the response of attempted grand synthesis; second, the response of the grand negation of all religions; and third,—and this may be what we are talking about—the response of a grand compromise among the religions. I was brought up in a tradition which was based originally in attempted grand synthesis. My name is Ali Mazrui. I come from Kenya, and I'm a social theorist and political scientist, and I'm currently at the University of Michigan. As my first name would imply, the attempted grand synthesis I'm referring to is that of Islam, which, in its birth in the Middle East, attempted to be a merger, a melting pot, if you like, of Judaism, Christianity and the message of Muhammad. It definitely was one effort in the direction of grand synthesis, but it couldn't be global, as we know it today.

Secondly, the most impressive case of grand negation is precisely the Marxist tradition, which we have sometime referred to here, and it is a brilliant critique of the abuses of religion as well as the abuses of capitalism. The poetic phrase, that religion is the "sigh of the oppressed creature, the soul of soulless conditions, and the opium of the people," that phrase from Marxism is a brilliant critique of the abuses to which religion has, at times, been subjected.

The question which we are perhaps raising today is whether we are moving towards exploring not a grand synthesis of the kind that Marxism has bequeathed to intellectual thought, but a grand compromise, which permits carrots to be carrots, and potatoes to be potatoes. Gandhi used to say this repeatedly, that all the great world religions came from outside the West, from outside Europe and North America, that in religious matters the West has always followed the East. But in technology and what has been referred to as modern ideology, the East is now following the West. We have imitated your technology, and even when we are in rebellion against your intellectual traditions, we often opt for a mode of rebellion that is itself bequeathed by the West, the most preeminent one being the Marxist tradition, itself a child and heresy of Western civilization. So when we are looking for the grand compromise, would it make sense to have a grand compromise only among the great religious traditions bequeathed by the East? Or should we at the same time remember that the only major thing in human history in which the Western world has led is precisely in modernity, technology, and the very things we seem to be anxious about. Should not the grand compromise also include a coming to terms with that area of intellectual leadership in which the West itself has been pre-eminent? With regard to ideologies, there is certainly a groping for ideological ecumenicism, or at least an ideological détente. In the case of religion, there is a groping for religious ecumenicism. Should it also be a kind of religious détente; and if it is a religious détente, whatever congress we may organize in the future should include in its agenda not only the grand compromise among people of faith and belief in the ultimate, but also a grand compromise between that set of religious people on one side and precisely the people who lead in areas of the secular exploration of violence which religious beliefs are sometimes frightened of, but about which we have to come to terms.

Even in the case of Marxism, as you know, a situation is rapidly approaching in which one-half of the human population of the world, in one way or another, is governed according to values derived at least partially from the Marxist tradition. If tomorrow, India became a Marxist society, under Communist rule, the great majority of humankind would be ruled and guided by a set of values at least partly derived from that tradition. So we have had a grand intellectual tradition that has captured the hearts of so many people. And although I don't myself belong to that new tradition, it is of vital importance that any congress emerging out of these deliberations should take that tradition into account.

One final point, Mr. Chairman. This is the Sixth Conference of the Unity of Science. Am I to say that there is a logical continuity to the idea of the unity of religion? Is this a kind of exploration, so that the seventh of the major experiments at some stage should be tied into those other areas, beliefs and values that have sometimes influenced our discussions here, but where the terminology has emphasized science. If that is the case, there is a logic, an understandable logic why we should move from issues of the unity of science to issues of compromise among religions and among belief systems. I won't be here tomorrow to pursue the issues further, but I think there is a case for that compromise. Thank you.

Robert Bellah: Thank you. An admirable disquisition on precisely the problems I think we should be thinking about this afternoon.

Joseph W. Meeker (Interdisciplinary Professor, Athabasca University; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada): My name is Joe Meeker, and I just have a small footnote to add that ought to, perhaps, be put on an agenda for any kind of a world conference, or world congress, of religions. It was brought to mind by your comments about the state of the sociology department at Berkeley, which I think reminds us of the disastrous effect that institutions have on good ideas. If there is to be such a congress, I think one of the major problems and one of the major challenges will be to make sure that it will be a congress of the world religions without becoming a congress of the churches of the world.

Lawrence Parsegian (Professor of Nuclear Engineering Emeritus, Troy, New York): I would like simply to emphasize the importance of what's been said. The chances of getting our religious groups to agree to reduce their importance, it seems to me, is a hopeless task. Our interest being the problem that we face, perhaps there is where the emphasis can go, as we suggested, and I think the values that are pointed out are going to have to be values that are clarified by groups other than the fundamental and traditional churches, but which would eventually influence the churches. Now I see the problem is great, as we have said in various papers on the world problems. I see a major role for the religious institutions. In fact, I see them as being the only factors that can really make a difference in resolving some of these world issues. The chances for getting those religious organizations to move directly toward solving the problems, however, are quite close to zero. There are organizations like the World Council of Churches, that are constantly struggling with this thing, and the non-governmental organizations connected with the United Nations represent groups that could hopefully make contributions toward that; but I suspect, as was suggested, groups that are not committed to specific religious views, groups such as have met here at this Sixth Conference that are prepared to open the mind toward something different, could wield the influence that ultimately could make a difference in the traditional religions. If only we could get away from our theological terminology and if we could get the theologians to cut down the number of words and reduce their saying to the essence and make it understandable to the world, I think we would have hope.

H. D. Lewis (Professor of History and Philosophy of Religion, King's College, London): There is one problem very much in my mind: I am very concerned, like other people, about getting a rapprochement of the different religions and understanding and cooperation of these common problems. About a year and a half ago, I spent three months in Japan, mainly engaged in a seminar primarily with Buddhist scholars. This I found to be one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. They knew what I believed and where I stood, and I knew roughly what their commitments were. We weren't there to convert one another, but we were there to understand more deeply what our attitudes involved were; we made what I thought to be considerable progress. It wasn't a devotional meeting, but it had a great deal of the characteristics of that, though unintentionally. I thought it a tremendous movement forward and I think the future of religion is going to call for a good deal of these effects, something deeper than dialogue, though dialogue is probably the best word at the moment. On the other hand, does this new movement imply that adherents to particular faiths will be asked to surrender or to "compromise," as was said, the basic things? There is a great deal that is common in religions and they can center on many things that are in common. I've written a lot myself on this particular theme. As Professor Parsegian stressed, there are differences, and people remain strongly committed to points that are at odds with members of other faiths. But this does not preclude that deepening of one another's faith through contact. I met a Catholic priest who had been practicing meditation for many years in a more or less Buddhist context and I asked him, "What does this do to your Catholicism?" He said, "I see more clearly on account of this." He was a better Catholic because of this. Is that the way you're thinking on this, or is it the way of syncretism or of ironing out the differences to a lowest common denominator?

There can be cooperation, there can be empathy, and there can be deepening of understanding without necessarily giving up things which are distinctive within the various faiths. But I'm bound not to surrender what I claim as central in the Christian faith. I've already surrendered a great many things which I consider peripheral. This issue is going to be quite crucial to whether this congress goes on, how it is going on, and what sort of people are going to be drawn to it. Are you going to say to Christians: "The distinctive things you claim about Jesus may be wrong, and you've got to give these up anyway." Or are you going to say to the Muslims, "You must give up your objections to the incarnation ideas as they are understood in the West." Is that what it involves? I think that we ought to be clear about this. I don't say we can have absolute clarity at the beginning, but there ought to be some understanding which would help people like myself to know whether I would be involved in this kind of thing or not. I think we ought to think about that.

Robert Bellah: I regret that you missed the opening comments, because they are aimed very much at that issue to make it absolutely clear from the beginning that we are not interested in having people give up their particularities from their own traditions. That is the last enterprise that this thing would have in mind. As you suggest, we do not want people, almost before they come to such a meeting, to have to agree to homogenize their views with everyone else's and give up anything that remains particular; but neither could it be fruitful to have a meeting of symbolic figureheads of centralized organizations who would be there essentially to state what the "X" religionists believe and leave it at that.

Here I think that Warren's notion is useful: the membership of this congress should be drawn from religious intellectuals and religious activists representing particular groups, theological seminaries, or other equivalent organized groups of study, and voluntary organizations involved in ethical action in the world. These groups are clearly associated with religious traditions, but do not speak as "authorities" and therefore do not have to bear the weight of representative status, such that the slightest deviation from inherited orthodoxy in one tradition or another would be viewed as something of a betrayal. It seems to me there is a middle ground that would be the direction of such a congress. It would have to aim toward people involved at the growing edge of their own religious traditions who are interpretive, re-interpretive, and applying their tradition to the reality of the world. These are the people who are open enough to have come to realize in the first place that other people may have something to teach them; but they are prepared neither to give up their own traditions nor simply to restate their own traditions as though it could not be informed by another experience and receive new life.

Archie Bahm: I assume, but I would like to be informed, as to whether or not Professor Lewis and associates may have thought about other groups that have sponsored world congresses in religion on especially the level of the best scholarship that was attainable from the various nations of the world. You may remember, and some have probably attended, the world congress on religion that was held down in Los Angeles a few years ago. You may be preparing to participate in the American Academy of Religion and its seven or eight outstanding associated groups of scholars, which will meet here in San Francisco at the S.F. Hilton immediately after Christmas. I assume then that such a group as this, that has its world congress as well as its divisional meetings, must be distinctly different in some sense from what you are thinking about in this conference. I'm raising the question as to what the particular distinctions are between the two. Would you think it advisable to contact these groups that study religion, to see what relationship might be worked out?

Robert Bellah: It seems to me the difference you ask about is overwhelming. The groups that you are talking about would never dream of producing a document of the sort that is being discussed here. The dedication to so-called "objective scholarship" is certainly one of my fundamental commitments and is itself, as was suggested by one of the natural scientists, a moral commitent of an aboslute nature; it is the underlying value basic for gatherings of scholars on religion. But that is quite different from the concerns that are proposed here. I think if you read carefully this document you'll see what the difference is. I will be at the A.A.R. meetings at the end of December on two separate panels. As far as I can see, that's a very different kind of enterprise. But I can certainly imagine Schubert Ogden taking part in this too. He would be an admirable person to have in this meeting, but he would be behaving in a very different context than as chairman of the A.A.R.

Bill Johnson (Florida State University): I would like to make one brief comment that bears upon the vantage point from which the proposed congress would approach its task. Though we can share the conclusion that modernity is one of the culprits producing the problem, it does strike me as odd not to include religions as also part of that problem-producing element. I'm trying to suggest that we will defeat that proposed purpose of the congress if we set up rather air-tight compartments such that we classify as the problem those things other than traditional religions but include traditional religions as a class of one and only one member for the solution to the problem. I think we have to start out making sure that we investigate traditional religions, namely ourselves, to see if we are not ourselves also part of the problem in order to set the proper stage to be part of the solution.

John Hamaker (Research Specialist, Agricultural Products Department, Dow Chemical Co.): I am not a religionist. I'm a scientist, and I should not be speaking. But I do feel compelled to say that I get the sense that we are looking for religious leadership rather than representatives. We want leadership in the religions so that some direction can be found out of the morass in which we find ourselves religiously and otherwise. Certainly, I don't see where you could possibly find any one organization to represent a religion; they're so fragmented. You're not going to find a Christian representative. Beyond that, you have to remember that you need to dilute your theologians with lay people. I don't have any contact with theologians normally, but I must say my contact at this place makes me feel that the theologians have to be in contact with people who don't understand those big words if they are going to say anything that makes sense. It is part of our problem, having to do with the unity of science in a broader sense of the word, that none of us understands each other very well when we're talking in our special languages.

Gabriel Vahanian (Professor of Religion, Syracuse University): I have heard us stress the diversity of the different religious traditions. I think this is true if we take account of the traditions and what they have bequeathed us. We overlook, perhaps, the fact that these traditions have some things in common; for example, at least the framework, which is a mythologic framework or a supernaturalistic framework. In contradistinction to that, I think we do have one thing in common and that is technological civilization. We don't understand one another and pass by one another when we don't address that issue. If we would address the issue of technological civilization, regardless of where we come from, I think we could speak slightly different languages and still understand one another. Thank you.

Warren Lewis: I'm not going to make a summarizing speech since tomorrow just continues what we've begun. I will repeat myself onone or two points. If you are interested in the proceedings of today and tomorrow, please leave us your name and address so that we can mail them to you and you can receive further communications from us. In a properly responsive way, let me say on behalf of our faculty at Barrytown that I feel very much at home in your midst in this discussion. We struggled through many of the issues you have raised today; it already seems clear to me that the dialogue can continue between you and us.

Now I want to assign your task for tonight. Perhaps it will be in terms of the "still small voices" of which Bob spoke; perhaps for you it comes through thinking hard; or perhaps for you, as for me, it comes under a hot shower; or as my Buddhist friend, David Kalupahana, said when he arrived in San Francisco after traveling all night from Hawaii and was completely tired and wasn't at all ready to go into one of those conferences, he said, "I think I'll go cross my eyes for 15 minutes and then I'll be ready for this." I hope David crosses his eyes fifteen minutes again tonight; tomorrow, when we get together again, after each of you has inquired of the Lord in his own way, bring your inspiration with you and we'll roll up our sleeves and go to work.

Permit me just a couple of impressionist responses to one or two extremely important issues. We're not about to ask any religious person to give up the absolutes of his or her faith. There's something very absolute about an undercooked carrot and there's something altogether absolute about a piece of stringy lamb; the longer you chew it, the bigger it gets. I take myself as an example. I started out a fire-breathing fundamentalist in the desert of West Texas, from there I went to Harvard Divinity School, from there to the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies at the University of St. Michaels College in Toronto, and from there I went to the University of Tübingen in West Germany. I have passed through stages, just as you have. (I forgot to mention my Buddhist days in college.) Now, I suppose, I'm in my Unificationist phase; but somewhere deep in my soul, I'm still a fundamentalist Christian from the West Texas plains. As I pass through this life, pilgrim that I am, and attempt to become what my mentor, Herb Richardson, once told me to call "polyconscious," I take it all with me as I go. I'll shuck some of that periphery my kinsman, Prof. Lewis, mentioned; but I'm going to hang on to a certain concentricity, am I not? We're talking about that. Keep your absolutes, and admire, celebrate and enjoy the absolutes of the other people. What that can also mean for me, Prof. Sharfstein, is the unlikely prayer, "Sancte Sigismunde, ora pro nobis". I certainly intend to invite brother Freud, should I draw up the guest list, or anybody else who shares this deep, pervasive, painful concern, and struggles with it professionally, as we have been struggling with it this week and this afternoon. If a person wants to come to *my* congress, then that person can come, whether he's a "fundamentalist" from Peking or Berkeley or Abilene, Texas. Even if he's a "fundamentalist" of the technological, Western, liberal university and arrogant enough to think he has all the answers! Humble people may come too, even if they don't believe, but still want to work on the problems. All who want to come will be there. We'll invite not the religions, certainly not the churches, but religious persons—"religious" according to their terms, not ours—who share our concern.

I think we have already seen this afternoon a solution to the false dichotomy between the traditional religions and the emergence of the new. I observe that in these days of cross-fertilization of the religions, that when I, a living person, synthesizing his own worldview, take a visit half-way around the world to visit my guru or when one of them comes over here and receives the Holy Spirit and starts blessing Jesus, what is it that I or they find? We find something that's valuable to us as a contemporary, modern individual but which is traditional in somebody else's antique religion. It's new to us, but it may be old-hat to somebody else, who's been chewing on it already long enough to get all the sweet juice out of it. Yet, those very old things can become new; all things can be made new. It's this process of making everything new again we're engaged in. Dear friends, have a pleasant evening. See you, I hope, many of you, tomorrow morning. (Applause)

AFFIRMATIONS AND A TENTATIVE PLAN

The world family has entered an international era. We see ourselves as "riders on the earth together." In this age, the future of the religious faiths is necessarily an interdependent one. The universal tendency of human consciousness is a coming together, and this includes human religions. More than co-existence, we are moving towards active participation in one another's lives and faiths. Towards this inevitable goal, we propose the formation of a Global Congress of World Religions.

The affirmations which follow are bred of conviction, though the plan is tentative and intended as seminal and suggestive. We, the faculty of the Unification Theological Seminary, have invited you to talk this matter over with us and with one another, to raise questions, explore ideas, and make suggestions for concerted effort. There are, as yet, no finalized proposals and no concrete programs. We stand at the beginning of what we hope will be a long, happy journey in the company of many friends towards a destination we are all eager to reach—the blending of human hearts in a song of home on a fully human earth.

Affirmations

—Each religion has its own profound truths and has produced universally great persons; each has its own absolute value, both historically and in terms of the contribution it makes to the totality of human spirituality; each has an indispensable share in fashioning the future of humanity.

—One purpose of religion is to make a better world. No one religion by itself, however, is capable of providing the leadership required to hold the human community together, fractured as we are by racial tensions and violent warfare, decimated by poverty and hunger, and diseased by want of education. Practical co-operation of the world's faiths in solving specific human problems is required as a means both of releasing new energies against these problems and of acting out spiritual values common to the religions themselves.

—The world religions can provide leadership for the new age. International influence is now being exercised by the political and industrial segments of our global society. As it is the business of multinational corporations to organize worldwide financial transactions and it is the purpose of the United Nations to provide a public arena for international political debate, in a similar way, international religion has its particular role to play. The religions, as world-builders, are uniquely qualified to give the ideological direction necessary to bring the human family into healthy wholeness. We are the teachers to all mankind of the spiritual truths which can make our globe a happier place to live.

—If the world's religions do not offer the required leadership, the inevitably resulting void is liable to be filled by militarists or reductionists or materialists. We feel this threat on the left particularly in terms of totalitarian communisms; and on the right we fear, as well, other equal and opposite reactionary fascisms, with their tools of militarism, political repression, torture, and racism. The responsibility of the religionists becomes thereby that much the greater. Ours is the task to provide an alternative: each of us relying on the transcendent perspective of our spiritual verities, banded together in a ring of fellowship, addressing ourselves with heartfelt compassion to the human problem.

Towards a Common Forum

In the past, valuable efforts have inlaid on a small scale a foundational mosaic of the diverse religions. Among the historical precedents, for example, are the religion of Bahai, the 1893 World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, contemporary ecumenical movements within and between numerous religious groups, and advances in the study of comparative and world religions at centers of learning around the world. We need now to establish a global forum in which the religions can take the public initiative which humanity may rightfully expect of them.

With Joseph Campbell, we affirm the "not-quite-desperate cause of those forces that are working in the present world for unification, not in the name of some ecclesiastical or political empire, but in the sense of human mutual understanding." We support the work of unification of the world's religions. "Unification" is a non-sectarian word which means for us neither union nor uniformity, neither creedal alignment nor imposed or implicit agreement on theological issues. We hold, rather, that there is already a sufficient basis in common, human, spiritual insights which would allow for a problem-solving orientation according to which we could work together even though we disagree doctrinally. We acknowledge that the religious situation is and shall continue to be a pluralistic one; we, too, are comfortable with the mutual tolerance and independence which pluralism implies. At the same time, we are convinced that communication, cooperation, and confederation of the world's religions is desirable as an expression of the essential unity of human hearts and necessary as a means of solving basic problems. Despite our differences, we affirm our ability to exchange wisdom and work together to fulfill commonly held religious ideals for our mutual benefit and the healing of the nations.

A Tentative Plan

We propose that a Global Congress of World Religions be convened, perhaps as early as 1981, to meet thereafter possibly every three years. Steps leading towards the first Congress might well be regional conferences held wherever interest is strongest. These gatherings, intermediate between nations and religions on the one hand and the Global Congress on the other, would clarify issues and lay the spiritual, informational, and organizational foundations for the initial Congress.

We suggest that a relatively small number (four or five) of co-sponsoring groups assume in full collegiality the administrative and financial responsibilities for the Global Congresses. We are pleased to offer our Seminary as one of the co-sponsors. We seek additional co-sponsors among cultural religious bodies, academic institutions, and special interest groups, with the ideal in mind of balanced religious representation. Because the Global Congress would not be understood as an inter-religious ecumenical council with juridical and legislative powers over the cooperating bodies, we suggest that emphasis should not be placed on the exclusive participation of official clergy or symbolic functionaries, gurus or spiritual leaders. The Global Congress would be attended by delegates from all the world's religions, and the delegates would be selected by their parent organizations; but the Congress would request the religions, centers of learning, and other participating groups to choose their delegates on the basis of intellectual attainment, creative leadership, and demonstrated active participation in concrete problem-solving. We design the Congress as a place of appreciation for work accomplished and of making plans for future work to be accomplished.

Our initial purpose is meeting, greeting, and becoming more aware of one another. Special attention would be paid to individuals and groups whose outstanding activities within their religion particularly distinguish them. Emphasis would fall on projecting cooperative research, institutes dedicated to the solution of particular problems, and the development of useful technologies and funding resources. Academic papers, symposia, and open discussion would explore areas of agreement and disagreement on a variety of topics.

The Congress could be organized in a number of different ways. It might be sectioned according to specific interests of the participants; among these, social concerns; education; history; sociology and psychology of religions; philosophy; sacred books; rituals and worship; the comparison of religious teachings. Typical activities might be scheduled, as follows: discussion of the validity of the sacred books as perceived by each of the respective religions; sharing of information on work in progress to edit and make available the world's scriptures; discussion of "God" among the religions; opportunities for experience and observation of liturgical and aesthetic activities of the religions; comparison of methods and results in the several quests of the historical founder of the religion; sharing of information on the techniques of propaganda against the common ideological enemies; education of children and illiterates; preparation of a unified plan of action to alleviate world hunger.

As a means to organize and bring to pass the initial Congress, we suggest that something like the following four groups be formed:

1) Advisory Committee—a committee of honor and control, composed of ranking members of the four or five co-sponsoring bodies, who will work closely with and through their representative member on the steering committee.

2) Steering Committee—the central organizational committee, composed of four or five persons representative of the co-sponsors, who are responsible for the structuring and direction of the Congress.

3) Representative Committee—the broad-base support group and informational network, composed of heads of religions or their delegates, notable scholars, and other leaders in the field of cultural-religious unification. This group will function as a source of input for the steering committee and interpret the decisions of the steering committee to their parent organizations.

4) An international society of scholars—who meet at the invitation of the steering committee to discuss issues related to the

concerns of the Global Congress, and who publish a journal of religious scholarship and opinion on these topics, as well as the proceedings of the Congresses and other occasional documents.

Honored guests and colleagues, we have a total of five hours on Sunday, November 27, and Monday, November 28, to attempt to answer the multitude of questions we are raising with you. Let us engage in a full and free discussion of these issues and, if possible, move towards a plan of action for the next step.

Do we agree that pluralism is the permanent religious situation?

Do we think that something like a Global Congress could be effective?

How might a Global Congress best be organized?

How could it be co-sponsored, and who ought the co-sponsors be?

How do we enlist the support and cooperation of the religious and academic institutions, and other bodies of cultural and religious interest around the world?

How do we structure such an encounter to minimalize unproductive friction and maximalize creative give and take, to provide an atmosphere in which we may disagree with integrity and cooperate with practicality?

Whom do we ask next to do what?

Are you willing to work with us?

The Faculty
Unification Theological Seminary
Barrytown, New York
1 November 1977

MONDAY MORNING SESSION
November 28, 1977

Warren Lewis: We have to live with the fact that today people will be coming and going. There's going to be something of an intellectual-spiritual smorgasbord, I think. People are leaving San Francisco, some have other meetings they want to attend. So some will be with us for a while and then they'll go away, and then they'll come back. If you are one of those people who has to go, we will simply adjust our agenda to accommodate you. David Kalupahana from the University of Hawaii would like to make a response to yesterday's activities, as would Richard Rubenstein, as would James Deotis Roberts. Peter Bilaniuk, who has to leave at about ten o'clock, has asked to say something too.

I would like to begin this morning's responses to yesterday's session with this comment: What we had to say to one another yesterday turned out to be fairly irenic, I thought. As a matter of fact, I was delighted at how things went yesterday. But I think that now the "convocation" is probably over and the "faculty meeting" is about to begin. Today is the day we roll up our sleeves, go to work on the ideas, and probably one another as well. Although yesterday was lovely and unitive, today need not programmatically be so. There will be criticism and critique and counterproposal, and certainly that will be welcome.

Since none of the named respondents is here yet, why don't we have someone else kick off. Let's start with Mary Carmen, because she said she has to leave.

Mary Carmen Rose: I myself in middle age have become a committed Christian and I expect to stay there. But all along, from the beginning, I've been encouraged by my looking at the world's great religions; my own Christianity is thoroughly illumined by what I know of Hinduism, Taoism, and all of them. I think that the differences must be maintained and can be understood. Each of the great ways of life has its roots in a particular view of reality, but we have something to learn from each other because our roots are in different places. I think that we have a criterion for judging the position from which we can best learn; it is the willingness to cultivate what Martin Buber calls the "I—Thou" relationship. One thing common among all the great world religions is what I call the classical view of inquiry. We've lost it in our day; we think of inquiry only in terms of the intellect; that's not the view of the traditional religions. Traditional religions ask for commitment of the entire self to doing the good works, the great work. Those of you interested in this must bring a commitment of the entire self. In the name of the world's great religions I tell you: If we do this, then the Tao will be with us!

Warren Lewis: "The Force be with you." (laughter)

Paul Sharkey (Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of Southern Mississippi): I'm very nervous, due to the fact that I have to talk about something I don't know anything about, yet I feel very strongly about that thing. I'm perplexed by the proposal because I'm not sure what the telos is. I think we all, perhaps, feel a frustration which Whitehead, I believe, clarifies in *Science in the Modern World,* when he talks about the relationship between religion and science in the Western world as being one of conflict, the result of which has been that religion has taken the defensive. Religion seemed to have "lost" to science in the case of Galileo and others similar. One thing we're trying to say here is we would like to regain a respectability for religion, for being religious. It has pained me a great deal at this [ICUS] conference that the sciences seem to be "respectable," that they are the "leaders". And yet, from so many eminent scientists at this conference there is a fear that science is losing some of its respectability in the world. If we lose respect for science, which I take very broadly to be epistemic and would include philosophy, and we lose respect for religion—the two most influential and important of human endeavors—then ultimately we lose respect for ourselves. The conflicts, I agree with Whitehead, are not a sign of decay, but of potentiality for growth. Through cooperation, rather than competition, among both the religions and the sciences, as well as between science and religion, we can achieve that growth.

I was brought up in Southern California; I come from what I call a cultureless culture, and I lament this aspect of American culture, which seems to be the culture of California. We lose our differences; the Jew doesn't want to be known as a Jew, the Italian doesn't want to be known as an Italian, etc. I have a great respect for the American blacks who would like to maintain some of their cultural heritage—soul food, the African culture, this sort of thing. It's interesting to me that when we play, we seek out other cultures; we come to places like San Francisco, because it is a multi-cultured city; we don't go to Los Angeles, and even if we go to Los Angeles, we seek out multi-cultural things there: Italian restaurants, Chinese restaurants, and so forth. We respect cultures which have maintained their integrity.

I would like to suggest a new metaphor that came out of my experience at ICUS entertainments last night. Instead of yesterday's "stew," the kind of cooperation we find among certain sciences is what we want to achieve in religion, a symphony or, if you will, a brass band. It's not a uniformity; they're not all trumpet players. It's not in unison; they don't all play together, and each instrument, in fact, each part within the sections of those instruments, must be different and must do something different in order for the beauty of the composition, both of the band and of the piece they are playing, to be revealed. A symphony or a band is not a uniformity; it is not playing in unison, except occasionally, and it's not made up of only one kind of instrument. It's important to recall that the conductor is not a member of the band, except when he does become a member of the band, in which case we no longer have a conductor. It is cooperation that makes a symphony or a band, a cooperative effort of each part, not even each instrument. In the violin section, not everyone plays the first violin part. It's a cooperation of each part doing its own part, its own individual thing; and if each does not do his own part well, then the meta-result, the harmonia, for which each of the separate parts exists, will not be achieved. What kind of band would we have if there were no respect for the piccolo, simply because he is a piccolo, but rather the trumpet section was thought to be more important because it somehow or other has greater respectability in the hierarchy of the band, which is usually the case in bands? If we all thought we had to be trumpet players, and all play the same part, the same tune, in unison at the same time, I am sure I would not want to hear such a performance. We should not be talking about a conference on unity of religions, and I'm not even sure we ought to be holding a conference on the unity of science. Perhaps we ought to have a conference on the cooperation of the sciences, but not the unity of it, and to build mutual respect because of, rather than in spite of, our differences. Thereby we come closer to something each of us desires—self-respect.

Petro B.T. Bilaniuk (Professor of Theology, Religious Studies, and Church History, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada): First of all, ladies and gentlemen, let me put it bluntly. I'm a sincere Slav, that is, a Ukrainian, who doesn't hide his feelings and doesn't hide his thoughts. I was profoundly disturbed by what I heard here yesterday. It was such a terrible mess that I didn't know where the beginning was and where was the end. Let us start from the very beginning, namely from the topic, or the title, of this paper distributed to us, "Towards a

Congress of the World Religions: Affirmations and a Tentative Plan." I understand there can be a congress *on* the world religions, or there can be a congress *of* the believers; but some hypostatic Christianity is not going to march in or some Buddhism-in-abstraction or Hinduism-in-general. We have to correct our speaking; we cannot mix abstractions with concrete realities. Furthermore, ladies and gentlemen, in this paper, there is no attempt to define what religion is all about; and that's a basic thing. We have to know what we are talking about. Furthermore, yesterday there were speakers saying we have to invite religions but not churches. In that case, you would be excluding all the Eastern churches automatically, because they believe that their expression of religion is only through the churches, in the church, as members of the church, as members in particular of the mystical body of Christ.

Furthermore, when I heard some statements about dialogue with Marxists, I was profoundly disturbed; because people were saying that the Marxist critique of religion is a brilliant one. I lived in the Soviet Union; for your information I was born there, and I was an object of Soviet education, anti-religious education. Believe me, there is nothing brilliant about it. It is brutal, inhuman, and, at the same time, they're anti-intellectual. Therefore, if you wish right away to enter into dialogue with Marxists, you have to realize that you're entering into dialogue with deadly enemies of religion. Take a look at what happened in Albania. In 1968, after the cultural revolution which happened there, in imitation of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, all religion was prohibited. Possession of any religious object or religious book or expression of religion was made punishable by law. They proclaimed themselves the perfect atheistic state in the world. Try to discuss religion with them! What I'm driving at is this: as long as Marxists are in the minority somewhere, they're going to enter into dialogue by criticizing you; they're going to throw mud at you, and then you have to defend yourself. But when they're in the majority and already have government in their hands, you are their victim; you have nothing to say; there is no longer any dialogue but rather a monologue of the party towards you. If you disobey, you are either liquidated or thrown out on the garbage heap. So, let us be realistic about things! And let us name things by name. In Red China, they've never proclaimed officially that they are an atheistic state. They didn't make it a law. But they practice it. All religious expression or organized religion vanished. All churches and synagogues, etc., etc., were closed. There is nothing left officially. They didn't proclaim it as a law, but they enforce it as law. So again, we have to realize what we are saying. Garaudy, a very fine gentleman, a Communist and a Marxist, was too friendly in his dialogue to Christians; so the result was that the French Communist Party expelled him. And this will happen to those with whom you are going to speak, if they become too friendly; they will be expelled by the machinery.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to propose that we start with a very modest program. This congress proposal is overloaded. We are trying to do more than the United Nations, do more than the World Council of Churches, do more than anybody has done before. Therefore, I would propose that we convoke a congress of believers. We can specify then and restrict ourselves not to the social issues right away or some sort of very bombastic program. Instead, let us discuss what religion is, what is the nature of God, what are His operations in regard to creation, what is the divine self-revelation, how does it operate? What is the divine immanence and transcendence of God? Then, what is human being in world religion? That is, that he's religious by nature, the human being is religious by nature. Then as the last practical point, we have to explore religious freedom and freedom of worship and that's all. I wouldn't go beyond these three points. Because if you immerse yourself in dialogue with all the philosophical representatives of the contemporary world, without having created a common basis for those who will be the representatives of those different religions, you're doomed not only to failure, but destruction, in fact. They are going to find cracks in your position, and they will sit back and watch how you're fighting among yourselves. Thank you.

Charles Malik (Professor of Philosophy, American University of Beruit): Mr. Chairman, my distinguished Greek Orthodox co-religionist, who has just spoken, stole many of my remarks from me. So, before others steal the remainder, I rise to put in my deposition. But I'm very grateful to him for the observations he made. The preliminary observation I would like to make is that as a practicing religious man myself, and not only a reflector on religion, as though it is something out there to be reflected on, I make the distinction between what I call "humanly speaking" and what is in the mind of God. Therefore, my judgments, for what they are worth, are all within the realm of what I call humanly speaking. Everything I say is humanly speaking. Humanly speaking, I feel myself critical of the orientation of your thinking about this matter. God has very strange ways of acting, as those of us who have studied His ways of acting in history know. I can not be sure that He is not doing something absolutely extraordinary now through you, Mr. Chairman, and your ideas. But, humanly speaking, I feel there is much to be careful about and much to be criticized. And with the largeness of heart that you have, I know you will permit me to speak of a congress of world religions.

The first point I want to make is that you speak of a congress of world religions. Either you are serious or you are joking. If you are joking, we participate in the joke. It's a very interesting joke. But, my dear friend, who is going to call this congress? You? Supposing nobody comes? How can a congress of world religions be called except from the standpoint of one of these world religions. You've got to answer me. Do you place yourself outside all of them, and then, as it were, you extend an invitation to them? I don't know how that works. I haven't the slightest doubt, I assure you, and please believe me, of your sincerity, of your concern, or of the tremendous significance of the problem that you put to yourself, namely the relevance of world religions, taken together, to the present critical world situation. I have absolutely no quarrel with that sense of urgency and relevance on your part. But a congress of world religions, what does it mean? These are very responsible words: "Congress." "World Religion." Now, the distinction to be made here is, and you've got to clarify it yourself, is it going to be a conclave of religions for dialogue and exchange and mutual acquaintance? That's one thing. Or, is it something with a view to the creation of a new organization as a separate entity with a view to action? Which of the two do you have in mind? A congress, a conclave of religions for dialogue and exchange and acquaintance, or the creation of a new organization as a separate entity with a view to action? Two completely separate things. You say, we begin with the first and the Holy Spirit may lead us into the second, or not. Well, I know how these things begin, and I know how they develop, and I know how they end, one way or the other. But you've got to be very careful from the very beginning about what you want, and you should take responsibility for how everything develops. That was the first major point.

On the second major point, the previous speaker stole my fire. Yesterday, a gentleman whom I deeply respect, [Joseph Meeker], spoke about the distinction between churches and religions; and he got some applause. I did not applaud him. I did not participate in the applause, but it showed the atmosphere, you see. Once a man makes that distinction and the audience responds positively to it, you are facing a very serious problem. The distinction between religions and churches is a false distinction. The distinction between religious people and church people is a false distinction. The distinction between religiousness in general, überhaupt, and religion in the concrete is a false distinction. And yet the gentleman got your applause, which reflects your point of view, your attitude, your abstracting into some kind of a man of religious nature. My dear friends, this distinction is a false distinction. Man, the individual, is already an abstraction. Each man belongs to twenty communities at the same time, and therefore each man has twenty attachments and loyalties at the same time. If you want to get the people together as mere individuals, with general religiousness about them, well, all power to you; certainly you will get them; they are floating around everywhere. But what is the effectiveness of that? Nothing, except a gradual building up of a new religion. This is not impossible. I'm talking humanly speaking. Everything is humanly speaking. If you want to catch a separate individual here and a separate individual there with this general "religiousness" about which I spoke, with no relation to the twenty different communities and attachments and identifications and loyalties which constitute him, well, all right, this is your choice. But then, you must reckon with ineffectiveness. You will be ineffective. On the other hand, you could go to the Pope of Rome, if you dare go to him, and invite him, and tell him, "I want a Cardinal to come to this Congress and I want him to represent the Catholic Church;" you could go to my own patriarch in Istanbul, the Ecumenical Patriarch, and ask him, "I want you to send me one of the other patriarchs to represent the Holy Orthodox Church in this Congress;" do the same thing to the Archbishop of Canterbury; and reckon with three or four hundred Protestant denominations, though there are about six or seven primary ones; go to the Lutherans, go to the Presbyterians, go to the others—now, I'm sure you're not going to applaud me when I say these things, because you already gave the applause to the man who told you, "Don't go to churches." But I am putting before you this problem that you've got to face. What do you mean by a "Congress of World Religions?" If you do not mean what I am talking about, including the churches, but invite just individuals picked out from the streets of San Francisco or Los Angeles or New York, what effective result will you have? A Congress of World Religions? The first is easier—individuals picked out here and there on the basis of their general religiousness, it would be very easy to do that, in fact, you can just go down the street a bit—very powerful. I don't represent God here at all in what I am saying; certainly I don't represent my church in what I am saying. I'm talking rationally. I hope Professor Lewis will permit me to be rational. Thank you.

If you can bear with me, one more word. The last word is this: I call your attention to what I call the fallacy of the lowest common denominator. If you get people together in a congress of world religions, and tell them, "Please talk only about the things that do not differentiate you from others," that is "come down to the lowest common denominator among yourselves," that's one thing. But, humanly speaking, I predict that it will peter out within, at most, ten years. For that's not real existence. Real existence is precisely in the things that differentiate us from each other. If we were all exactly alike, we would not be many. But we are many. The manyness of us is due to the fact that we have different ideas, convictions, outlooks, faiths. Therefore you already introduce a restrictive principle if you aim at the lowest common denominator. If this is a real congress of world religions, you should go to the Muslims and get an official representative of Islam; you should go to Orthodox Judaism and ask them to send you an official representative of their own point of view to speak in their name. Now, I am saying these things to show you that you are probably, again humanly speaking, biting off more than you can chew. But if you ask me to come, if my church sends me representing it, or the representative of Judaism or of Islam or of Hinduism or of any other religion, or of the half-dozen major Protestant denominations, each of us has got to represent his point of view in full. As an Orthodox, I must—if you really give me the opportunity—talk to you about the church; about the saints; about the place of the Virgin Mary, which is so offensive to 95% of those in this room here; about the unity of tradition; about all kinds of things. These are offensive to you; but unfortunately, I didn't create the world. This is a world made up of offensive things; and yet, people live under the offense, within the offense, and for the offense. This is the most serious project; God help you with it. I have no idea how the design of God is to come out with this project of yours. I'm absolutely sure of your sincerity and the depth of your concern. But I wanted to point out these three fundamental things.

Warren Lewis: Thank you very much, sir. In the next 15 or 20 minutes, we will hear from the three people who were mentioned earlier: Dr. Kalupahana, Dr. Roberts, and Dr. Rubenstein. After we hear from them, I want to say something very briefly about the nature of our proposal. And then we'll break for a cup of coffee. When we come back from coffee, I would like for us to spend a few minutes actually brainstorming. After we have reported to one another what we came up with in our brainstorming activity, then the time for direct critique of what the other people are saying will come, and as we work on one another's ideas, and amend them, and polish them, we will move towards the goal of the morning. The goal is not the issuance of a statement, an invitation or creed, or even a general consensus, but something different. We're working at a personal level today more importantly than at any other level. These "cracks," as Peter Bilaniuk calls them, are wide and deep; and the job is enormous. We have, "humanly speaking," bitten off more than we can chew. We know that. That is why we're looking for a few extra sets of teeth to help us gnaw away on it. What we're after today is your solidarity; not necessarily your consensus, but your solidarity. Now, let's call on David Kalupahana, who is the Chair of the Philosophy Department at the University of Hawaii.

David Kalupahana (Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, University of Hawaii): Would you mind if I take a couple of minutes to deviate from the discussion and dispel some misunderstandings that I find concerning our friends from the Unification Theological Seminary. The idea for this conference was mentioned to me at the last ICUS Conference in Washington by my friend, Warren. I must say I was very enthusiastic about it at that time; since then we have had long discussions with the Unification Theological Seminary, and Warren came to Hawaii to discuss the possibilities. But the rumor that I've heard in the last couple of days is the idea that Hawaii is opposed to any such conference. I must categorically say that that's not true. Ours is a State University, founded by the taxpayers there; and we have hundreds of religious sects; I myself am very new to the place. So when the proposal came that such a conference might be held in Hawaii, I talked to our faculty and discovered that long before I came to Hawaii, one of the religous organizations in Hawaii wanted to sponsor a conference in association with the Department of Philosophy. At that time, however, the Department, having considered all the possibilities, refused the suggestion, because they felt it would be offensive to the other religious denominations. They want to be as neutral as possible. But that doesn't mean that they are opposed to the idea of having conferences; and, in fact, as you know, Hawaii was one of the first places to start the dialogue between the East and West, thanks to the pioneering efforts of Professor Charles

Moore. There are some in my department, as in the religious studies program at Hawaii, who are opposed to it. But there are lots of people who are very enthusiastic about the conference. So I want to assure the members of the Unification Theological Seminary that, in principle, we are not opposed to it. We are faced with some practical problems, however.

Coming back to the area of discussion, I can only speak from the point of view of a student in Buddhist philosophy. I don't know much about the other religious traditions. I know a little about Western philosophy, but that's about all. But we have the same problems in Buddhism as everyone here is describing. I have been to most of the countries where Buddhism is and I myself come from a very conservative Theravada country. Buddhism represents one of the most pluralistic religions in the world. We have very extreme forms, leaving aside the original message of the Buddha. (I don't want to talk about it right now, because every time I say something about it, lots of people start shouting at me). In the country from which I come, which is predominantly Theravada, we have a very strong belief that salvation could come only through one's own effort. No grace from outside could help us to attain freedom or happiness. Now, as some of you know, the other extreme of the pole is to be found in places like Japan, where you have what is called "Pure Land" form of Buddhism. There, the efficacy of individual effort is completely denied, as I understand it, and reliance entirely upon the grace of.the Buddha Amitabha is recognized. So you have two extremes within the same Buddhist tradition. And then, metaphysically, we have all kinds of wills. The Theravadans, on the one hand, accept a very realistic point of view with regard to nature and the world; and on the other hand, we have the extreme form of idealism, which is found in the Mahayana traditions; then there are what I may call very naturalistic traditions in Buddhist philosophy and, as well, opposite schools which recognize the extreme forms of transcendence. So we have all these different points of view, not only with regard to theory, but also with regard to practices. But still we all call ourselves Buddhists. What is it that makes all of us Buddhists? One purpose of this conference would be to probe into these questions and find out what kind of unity there is.

I have found there is some kind of fear attached to the search for unity, but I think that should not be the case. We are not surrendering our differences when we talk about unity. We want to find out what aspects can be compared. This is what we're doing at the University of Hawaii, Philosophy Department. People who are teaching Eastern philosophy at the University of Hawaii are not trying to convert the students of Western philosophy to Asian philosophy, nor do the Western philosophy teachers try to convert the Asian philosophy students to Western philosophy. But we are trying to see the points of similarity and points of difference as both important. I assume this is the primary aim of the Unification Theological Seminary when they started this idea. So I must say, as a Buddhist, I'm not opposed to this search for unity. We are of diverse opinions, but that doesn't mean, as Mr. Paul Sharkey pointed out, that we cannot have respect for one another. So what could really come out of the conference is, in the end, to see the similarities, in spite of the differences, so that each one of us could respect the other's point of view without being dogmatic.

I would like to refer to a "parliament of religions" which already exists there, right now, in my own country. It is not a conference. Millions of dollars are not spent on it. It is a place where all of the people of all religions get together; and when they get together, they express certain sentiments which would be very interesting for us to examine at some stage in our discussions. It is one of the most beautiful peaks in the country, and if you look at a map of Sri Lanka, you'll find the name given to it by the Britishers when they were there. It is called Adam's Peak. Now, every religionist in Ceylon refers somehow to Adam's Peak. We have almost all religions, and the people belong to all the different religions. We are predominantly a Buddhist country. We have Muslims, we have Christians of all denominations, and we have Hindus. Every year, during certain seasons, people from all these religions, pious devotees from all these religions, climb up this mountain. The Buddhists believe that the Buddha came and left his footprint there as he was leaving. I don't know much about Christian theology, but Christians consider it sacred because it is related to Adam. I don't know what that means, but it is called Adam's Peak. The Hindus think that one of their gods came and resided there for some time. And the Muslim people believe that Muhammad visited that place after leaving his footprint at Mecca; he also came to Sri Lanka and left his footprint there. There's a huge footprint carved in the rock; and all the religions go there and pay their respects to that footprint. Now, that's parliamentary religions in practice. But what I'm sure you want to do is to find out why these people are doing that, what is the basis of that belief. Is there anything common there? And I would like to say that this kind of conference, if organized properly, would also have, not only the other religions, but even divergent Buddhist traditions to see, to understand each other, and find a common ground of agreement. As far as I can see, in spite of all these differences among the Buddhists philosophically over what the dogma is, when it comes to selflessness and altruism, we are all one. So, I would like again to quote Paul Sharkey's comments: what you would want to find out is how we can respect each other and have self-respect in spite of our differences. I sincerely hope that it's going to be a success. Thank you.

Warren Lewis: Thank you. David told me about Adam's Peak when I was in Hawaii visiting and had dinner in his home. The religion of the "fictive footprint" is an appealing one, don't you agree, Lonnie? When David told me the story before, he emphasized that during the climb, nobody asks you in which theological system you are ascending and descending the mountain. Rather, they ask you if any of your kinfolk or friends fell off, either on the way up or on the way down; because it is a rather tortuous path, they care for one another. If there are people there who have to carry canes as they go, more able-bodied folk help them without asking whether they're going there to visit Adam or a Hindu god or the Buddha or Muhammad. I think I shall become a devotee of the Religion of the Fictive Footprint; it's the new religion of the future. Now let's hear from James Deotis Roberts.

James Deotis Roberts: Warren asked me to speak directly to the question of what would be the contribution of the African religions to such a meeting. I think that would be a very important matter to discuss. I have been part of several world religions sessions. I've worked with the Temple of Understanding, which has met in several parts of the world in a project similar to this one. I never tire of reminding leadership that there are hundreds of millions of people in Africa who for thousands of years have had a deep spirituality. We cannot ignore African-Americans; because in the last decade and a half, we have been searching for our own roots very seriously in all fields of scholarship, including theology and phenomenology of religion. We have discovered, as Joseph Washington did when he stumbled on this in the early '60's in his book *Black Religion,* that Will Herberg's book on Protestant-Christian-Jew does not include the religious experience of Black Americans. Joseph Washington wrote a book to point out that omission. Even though his conclusions were not accepted by his colleagues and were severely criticized, we have had to deal with his discovery ever since. In the late '60's, we became very serious about this in the so-called Black Revolution;

and recently Haley's *Roots* has certainly made the search for peoplehood and personhood to overcome the identity crisis on the part of Afro-Americans a popular concern. Now, what this means from an academic-religious point of view is that we have been in serious conversation with the African and, more recently, West-Indian scholars of African descent. We have also published in the journal which I edit at Howard, the *Journal of Religious Thought,* some of the findings of those discussions on religion between peoples of African descent.

I would like to say that I have discovered certain things in the area of epistemology, as well as the phenomenology of religions, which have certainly enriched my own understanding of religion. I had done work in Asian religions prior to this and have found many similarities between what I've discovered in African religions and what I discovered in the Asian religions, but which I did not find in my studies in classical Western religion and philosophy. I have broadened my experience and have discovered Africa. It has yielded enriching, fulfilling additions to other discoveries in the study of religions. The way of thinking which seems to be developing out of Africa is "soulful" thinking. Just as Black experience and culture is soul culture, Black religion is soul religion, and Black thinking, as Basil Davis from Trinidad says, is soulful thought. What this means is that we think with our whole being. There is no dichotomy between thought and life. It's a thought that participates, that comes out of one's involvement in one's living world. I had earlier discovered something like this in Pascal and his "reasons of the heart." I didn't know at that time why I was so moved by my study of Pascal, until I began to look into the African background of Black thought and experience. I realize a tremendous affinity between what I discovered in Pascalian thought, the thought of William James and some others who have a more perceptive or psychological approach, to thought. Then I look at Howard Thurman (who, by the way, is retired here in San Francisco), a great Black poet and mystic philosopher for many years. He has written a good deal of mysticism and religiosity out of the Black experience. I realized why I was so fascinated with my Black colleague, senior colleague, Howard Thurman. There was something in my own experience and the experience of my people in terms of their spirituality and whole heritage that somehow gave me an affinity and real rapport with that Pascalian and Jamesian tradition in Western thought, and in Eastern thought, and now, of course, in the African component. I would call this holistic thinking;

and it's not alien to Biblical thought, especially the Old Testament perspectives. There is a rich convergence here of religiosity and spirituality which is now being discovered, and I think the African contribution is very profound.

There was a meeting between the Black artists and African intellectuals in Paris. Some have prescribed some meeting there as developing this concept of "negritude" in West Africa, especially in French-speaking countries of West Africa, as a way of giving a kind of handle to an African way of thinking which has its own contribution to make to epistemology, philosophy, religious thought, and so forth. Some of you know about John Mbiti's work on time as a creative way of developing out of the African religions and philosophies a philosophical perspective and world view. The resources need to be mined. Any getting together now between philosophers and theologians should include the creative contribution of some of the great thinkers who are now emerging in Africa, people such as Idowu, and Mbiti, and many others; Luke, out of Sierra Leone and many others from different parts of Africa. Then, of course, there's an independent church movement which has a great deal to say about blending Christianity with the traditional religious experiences of tribal Africans. The last note I wanted to sound is about the extended family, the African way to communalism, socialism, Ujima, familyhood. This concept gives us the sense of togetherness which we lost because of what slavery did to us by taking babies from their mothers' breasts and separating husbands from wives and splitting the family; then the further blow to the family in the northward movement of Blacks from the rural South to the urban North, and finally all the tragedy we have experienced in the urban ghetto situation. We want to understand religion in a way that can bring the family, the primary institution, together to develop a strong sense of equalhood and to develop the quality of life. Religion is at the center of this, and as we look at the African religious experience, we find some rich material there that can be used. I think all religions can be enriched by African religion because of the holistic understanding of religion not as a one-hour, once-per-week reaffirmation of faith. It penetrates the whole of life, the whole community, the social and political order. This explains why Black ministers are instinctively involved in social-justice questions without raising the issue whether or not politics and religion mix. Our people are suffering, and our religion is such that it just forces us to gather up all of this and speak to the whole person and all of life.

Warren Lewis: Thank you, Dr. Roberts. I especially liked the very last thing you said. Those last 15 or 20 seconds really got it for me. You can talk about how hard the job is, but when you look at Black ministers, who have *had* to unify politics and religion, because if they didn't they would get lynched, then you know when the fires underneath you are hot enough, you can do it. The fire may not be the Holy Spirit every time; it may be the fire of persecution, but maybe there's no difference between those two fires at all. Just because a job is hard doesn't mean it can't be done.

The other thing you've reminded me to speak about, Dr. Roberts, is conferences. I love to go to a good conference; I love to hear a good paper read. But when I go to a situation where I can meet the person who reads the paper, that's a better situation. For example, when I travelled to Hawaii, I visited the Kalupahana home, played with the children, met David's wife, had supper with the family. You know, the Ceylonese are barbaric people; they eat with their hands! I had a marvelous time! Here was all this wonderful curry, and you dig into it with these four fingers instead of a spoon. You dip it up and use your thumb as a pusher. The secret to Ceylonese good manners is not to get grease above the palm, which is hard for a Westerner. In the midst of all that, we talked about Jesus and Buddha, while we shoveled Mrs. Kalupahana's delicious food into our gullets. That's different from listening to and criticizing a paper.

David and I have become friends and colleagues, and we are beginning to share at certain levels at which one cannot share if the personal bond has not been bound. Should anyone ever say anything ugly about Ceylonese Buddhists, they'll have me to contend with, if you understand what I'm getting at. David and I double-handedly can now hold the world together at that point. I would like to meet some of these Black people from Africa Dr. Roberts is talking about. How do they eat? Do they eat with their hands, too? And what do they eat? And whom or what would they talk about while I talk about Jesus? I'm talking about the unification of persons, not religions, and of my coming together with the living representation of everything that stands behind that person on earth and in heaven. That's not something we do at the A.A.R., or at least it isn't very often done at conferences of that nature, where something else is the order of the day. The next person to speak is Richard Rubenstein.

Richard Rubenstein (Professor of Religion, Florida State University): I have encouraged Professor Lewis to initiate this project and to assemble people to discuss its viability and feasibility. That said, I will now turn to some questions that I have in my mind. I find on page 2 of this statement: "The world's religions can provide leadership for the new age." It follows that "international influence is now being exercised by the political and industrial segments of our society." Then this paragraph follows: "If world religions do not offer the required leadership, the inevitably resulting void is liable to be filled by militarists or reductionist materialism." As I reflected on the question of who will offer the required leadership and under what circumstances, it comes down to a question of who are the value-defining elites in our society. I think that by a conference or by a series of conferences, it is not possible to supplant a dominant value-defining elite with another value-defining elite. Value-defining elites gather power, even without their knowing it, until they come to a point at which their dominance overthrows the established order. I'm thinking just now of the conflict between the Puritan intellectuals at Cambridge University, who could not become a dominant value-defining elite in England and use the language of religion to assert their challenge to the established, value-defining elite. They succeeded, however, on the American Continent. That kind of thing was brewing; it wasn't the result of a conference, nor was it the result of some realization that power was slipping from one group. It worked its way silently until it had a real chance to express itself in a material and social context. The rise of the bourgeoisie in the 19th century is similar. These things happened when there was a congruence of intellectual and artistic, spiritual and material factors. Now, as this paper suggests, in the late-20th century, it's clear that the value-defining elite is the technocratic, administrative elite in business and politics. In the United States, it's perfectly clear that the technocratic, administrative elite is both business and politics. The shifting from one sphere to the other goes on quite comfortably and there's no problem within the arrangement.

Now, if that's the case, why, then, did I urge upon Professor Lewis that he and his colleagues work on this project? I would like to suggest that there is a power which religious elites do possess: it is the power to communicate symbols and to transform symbols. While this may be a modest power, it is a power; it is a power that ought not to be neglected. It is a power which I think has been amplified by the media. I'm not a Southerner, but I have become fascinated with the deep South. For those who don't know it, I live 80 miles from Plains, Georgia, and I am aware of what has been called the "third Great Awakening" taking place in the United States. I refer to the tremendous rise of evangelical Christianity. Although I was identified in the middle sixties as one of the leaders of the "Death-of-God," I can say in defense of myself that I never said that religion was about to collapse. I questioned the credibility of certain formulations of the concept of God, although I certainly never questioned the credibility of the existence of God. It is because people misunderstood what my colleagues and I were saying in the mid-60's that they come to me now and ask, "If God is dead, why is it that we've got this third great awakening going in the United States?" Whether this or that concept of God is alive or dead, religion and religious expression is very much alive. The media, of course, focuses on this liveliness. I think what you're really talking about is either one or a series of media events. I'm conscious of the fact that *this* is a media event. I have spoken to representatives of television and the press at least a dozen times this week since I've come here in my capacity as a chairman of one of the ICUS sections. And, you know, to bring together 500 people from all over the world is a matter of public note; it is certainly no silent occurrence. What makes this a media event is the fact that the media pays attention to us. Similarly, when the Unification Church used the occasion of a lecture I gave on the Unification Church to begin their mission in Tallahassee and the local paper gave it an eight-column banner headline, all the way across the first page, what they did was to transform a rather ordinary and pedestrian lecture, which neither endorsed nor condemned the Unification Church, into a media event. That I wasn't hostile was, in itself, sensational to them. They transformed that very ordinary occasion into an event which involved everybody in Tallahassee. And then what happened is that Jim Fleming, resourcefully using our public access channel, which must be supplied by cable TV to the citizenry, is conducting an effective Unificationist mission that way. I would urge you not to underestimate the power of media events. The Sadat-Begin encounter was, and is, a media event; and it's perfectly obvious that it is a transformative media event. Look at what is happening politically right now, simply because these two men were seen together by hundreds of millions of people. We mustn't think in a linear fashion. When Nixon came back from China after being with Chou En-lai and Mao-tse Tung, everybody said, well, nothing's happened; there was no agreement. That's the old way of looking at things. Similarly, they said, nothing happened with Sadat and Begin, that there was no agreement. Again, that's the old way of looking at things. Media transforms at the same time that they report. I think that if we stage this media event, some significant things will happen.

It will require, where possible, cooperation of established leadership. I heartily concur with Doctor Malik, and I say this as a person who is truly *persona non grata* with the established leadership of my own religious community. Nevertheless, I would urge that we do everything possible to involve such leadership. I would also say that I'm doubtful that we are going to get it in any of the communities. But I think that if you can't get it, then you use what you have. If you can't have a world congress of representatives of established religions, then you have a world congress of representatives who come out of the established traditions and who speak on their own behalf.

Finally, I want to play the part of a college professor for a moment and object to one proposition which I think is specious, the notion that the purpose of religion is to make a better world. Yesterday we heard from one of America's most distinguished sociologists of religion as he, following Max Weber, discussed one of the characteristics of what he calls the historical religions and early modern religions: world rejection. One of the results of the phenomenon of world rejection is heightened sense of self. The reason why I object to the facile observation that the purpose of religion is to make a better world is that if we become platitudinists already, at this stage of the game, we're going to viscerate what we can do. Of all the platitudes I know, the one that can most easily be contested is the "purpose of religion is to make a better world." Now harken to me: I'm not saying that the purpose of religion is to make a worse world or that the purpose of religion is to legitimate established hierarchies of power which make for exploitation and misery. But I would urge you to be careful about the use of platitudes. In this connection, one last comment which comes out of my experience dealing with the press this weekend. One of the questions asked by a practical T.V. reporter was: "Did your sessions live up to your expectations?" I could tell this young woman expected me to gush. I said that some did, but some of them were so awful, I wanted to shriek. If we be precise and accurate about who we are and what we are doing, if we remain modest enough in our claims, we will get much further than if we become platitudinous and gushy either in our claims or in our aspirations. I urge us to go forward. It may very well be that there is a messianic element in the Unification Church, as there is in Christianity and Judaism, and we in this particular context may be part of a larger messianic plan. But we are at neither the heart nor the center of the fulfillment of this plan as yet. So I would urge modesty and an awareness of what we have going for us and what we do not have going for us. Thank you very much.

Warren Lewis: It would be platitudinous to say how much I agree with what Richard has said. Instead, I propose time for a coffee break.

[after a short intermission]

Let me say that you are treating our proposal in just the way I hoped you would. You have taken it seriously, but you realize that we don't take it seriously. By that I mean we're ready to toss it aside, if that seems to be the best thing to do. Nobody's ego is at stake, nobody's theology is on the line. It is a tool to bring about this conversation. We can sharpen it, break it, or trade with it for another, any time. I thank you for that and I want this kind of give and take to continue. If there is something of value here, we'll smelt it a bit and see what's left when we're through. Next, we're going to divide ourselves up into three groups and do some brainstorming. Brainstorming requires a very particular technique. During a brainstorming session you make whatever suggestions you please, but it has to be stated positively. This style of activity has demonstrated its effectiveness in terms of getting the creative juices flowing, because when you are not afraid somebody's going to shoot you down, then you feel free to bring out your most stupid idea, which, in the long run, of course, may prove to be the best idea offered. Before we brainstorm, Lonnie Kliever has synthesized a few heuristic questions he wants to ask to stimulate you during the brainstorming session.

Lonnie Kliever: I'd like to bring us back to the symbolic level before we go into our brainstorming groups. We are a group in need of a metaphor for the unity we seek in this kind of congress. I appeal to you to return to the symbolic level to reconsider the metaphor. Metaphors and symbols, as Paul Ricoeur told us, are not escapes or covers of problems which should be seriously and rigorously debated and engaged in all their toughness. On the other side of the issue, he has taught us that symbols are food for thought. So before we go to our tables, I would give you food for thought. In fact, we have been given some "food" and that's what we have been arguing about, but without an agreement on the metaphor of the unity we seek. It's a pure accident that Ricoeur's notion of *"food* for thought" nicely coincides with my preference for Warren Lewis's metaphor of the stew, rather than Paul's suggested alternative of the symphony. This is the metaphor I want to underline again, not only because I'm a fellow Texan, and have an appreciation for stews more than symphonies, despite my long and arduous cultural treks out of West Texas. What's involved in a symphony, of course, are different instruments playing different parts, not all at the same time, blended harmoniously, beautifully, providentially, into a magnificent "feast" of sound. But that doesn't happen unless somebody has already written the score, and somebody already knows what part his is to play, and somebody is forceful and inspiring enough as a conductor to get all of these trumpets and cellos and bass fiddles and kettle drums together. Apart from that, what you have is the fascinating pre-symphonic warm-up, which is anything but a symphony. The pre-symphonic cacophony, when we each play our instrument with a virtuoso limbering up of our mouths or exercise of our fingers or arms, precedes the exercise to follow.

In our present situation, precisely what we lack is a score, what we lack is a director, unless we're prepared to absolutize the Great Conductor in the Sky, and the score that He has in mind to communicate in some way, apart from our effort, to us. I don't mean to be impious, or to poke fun, but simply to state what I see in the metaphor of the symphony. The stew metaphor seems more appropriate because it says, among other things, that the unity we seek and might achieve, is, in some sense, an accident—an accident of what we put into it and how that gets together. No two stews are ever the same. What you put into it, how you stir it together, and what disastrous or serendipitous mistakes you make in mixing it up determine the unity, the product, the outcome, the eating of the thing. It's further worth noting that every stew was cooked for the first time once upon a time, without anyone's knowing what it was going to taste like ahead of time, without understanding how all of it was going to come together, and indeed, without knowing—until you tried it—whether it was worth attempting. The proof of every pudding is in the eating; if we judge ahead of time that this pudding is not worth cooking, we will be spared both the surprise of pleasure and the regret of disappointment in ever tasting what might have been. I would urge us, then, to stay with our West Texas prophet's metaphor of the stew, and recognize it for what it is: dangerous, promising, and uncooked; an unreciped, unrehearsed stew. Charles Lamb discovered how to roast a pig by burning his house down. (Laughter) We may burn down a few houses too, but in so doing, we may find that we don't have to do that every time subsequently and henceforth when we get together. What we need are some stew-ards to gather the ingredients, chefs to decide the proportions of how much of what goes in, and a pot big enough to contain the ingredients and keep them from boiling over. What we need is a recipe of an agenda which will cause us to interact with one another with the honesty and the abrasiveness that we've already seen happen this morning. We'll generate enough heat to cook something, maybe enough heat to enlighten something. For these reasons I propose that we go to our discussion groups thinking about a stew rather than humming a symphony.

Paul Sharkey: Perhaps I don't mean a symphony; but a stew, to me, is not alive; a musical happening is.

There is something common among musicians; it is a knowledge, perhaps of various degrees, but a knowledge and devotion to music. When we're talking about religion, we're talking in some sense about knowledge, and certainly about devotion.

One form of music that has risen in American culture is a form where there is no conductor, there is no score. We call it jazz. It's one of the things I have found out about by living in the South and recently moving to New Orleans. I think we don't really disagree. But I would like to focus on the living, the knowledge, and devotion with which both the musician and also the religious individual are involved.

Warren Lewis: I appreciate what you said, Paul. I do feel a little more comfortable with the idea of a jam session myself than with a pre-orchestrated symphony. I think that's what Lonnie's getting at. You know, Professor Kliever, I don't disagree with you, although you may have given me a touch of heartburn, a bit of indigestion! Now let's count off for the brainstorming groups.

Archie Bahm: I have something I'd like to say.

Warren Lewis: I'd rather you wait until after we've brainstormed. The discussion can continue then.

Archie Bahm: I have only a short comment, and besides, I have to leave.

Warren Lewis: If you have to leave, then say it. The first rule is, if you have to leave, you get to talk before you go.

Archie Bahm: The unity symbol, which is fundamental to our whole program and the Unification Seminary, I suggest, is both desirable and obsolete. Rather, we live interdependently; interdependence is the symbol. We need not a Unification Theological Seminary, but an Interdependence Theological Seminary; neither a lamb stew nor a symphony. The personality is something alive, something organic, one person comprises many parts, many functions, many potentialities, many values, peoples, knowledges, skills and efforts, all functioning together. This is the kind of unity we need, an organic personal unity where you have the whole and the parts living together; not just a stew, but interdependence is what I suggest. If I burn your heart, I'm sorry; I love you, but that's what I must say for now.

Warren Lewis: I'm glad you persevered, Prof. Bahm. Thank you. Now, we'll count off, starting here. One, two, three...

On the last page of the proposal, you will find a series of questions. Please disregard the first two questions: "Do we agree?" and "Do we think?" We've all been talking about both questions already. What you have to say on the following questions will reflect what you agree to or disagree about, and what you think. Please attack the next questions. How might a global congress or global stew or global symphony or global interdependence seminary best be orchestrated, cooked or concocted? How could it be co-sponsored, and who ought the co-sponsors to be? How do we enlist the support and cooperation of the religions, academic institutions, and other bodies of cultural and religious interest around the world? How do we structure such an encounter? Whom do we ask next to do what? Are you willing to work with us? The heart of your contribution in this brainstorming session beats with the pulse of your own statement to yourself: "If this were my job, this is how I would go about doing it."

(An interlude follows as groups meet to brainstorm, approximately twenty minutes.)

Warren Lewis: Now we'll have a report from the first group.

Perry Cordill (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): The first question is, "How might a global congress be organized?" Some of the ideas were as follows: one is to request support from such organizations as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, or the National Council of Churches, etc., etc. Also, Dr. Rubenstein's idea of a religious elite is good—to bring individuals of importance from different religions together through communication through our organization. We recognize a problem of how to reach people from Eastern religions. We've been talking about Western religions, but how are we to reach those from the East? Some suggest writing to several universities in the East. Also, there's a group called the International Association of Religious Freedom, which was organized after the 1893 conference of world religions.

Also, we suggest finding religious leaders who are willing to sponsor this; person-to-person communication with those individuals whom people know, who are willing to come to something like this. . . Excuse me Dr. Pyun, what did you mean?

Hae-Soo Pyun (Adjunct Professor of Oriental Philosophy, Unification Theological Seminary): I suggested we work through foreign embassies in Washington, D.C.

Perry Cordill: Thank you, Dr. Pyun.

How would a congress be co-sponsored? One suggestion is that action for developing the co-sponsorship may evolve as we search out individuals. We'll be learning and growing as we go. But the purpose is in the search itself; in other words, some kind of religious unity is reached in people coming together to find a practical, viable way to unite. Just the fact that people from Eastern and Western religions would be involved in developing a final purpose of that conference would be heading in the right direction. Finally, we suggest that a committee would be formed which would work with a combination of consensus and votes, used together as we develop the actions we are to take and what organization is to be developed. Thus we would have people working viably and practically together.

Lonnie Kliever: One important suggestion that came out was to pursue the notion of a steering committee, rather than co-sponsorship: a steering committee made up of people representing all the parties of interest to the congress, but not to develop a co-sponsorship of institutions and bodies as such. There are all kinds of political ends and vested interests that we're going to run into. Furthermore, it seems good to fund the steering committee independently rather than directly and officially, keeping it free from institutions, whether academic or ecclesiastical, and other groups, whether political or religious.

Perry Cordill: On how to contact various religions, one suggestion was to ask them. So communication is of the essence here. We must find address lists, so that we can mail out to as many people as possible, developing a tremendous mailing system. Also, we want to get in touch with faculties of seminaries and colleges, especially professors of comparative religion, to try to interest them first, and then, let them interest their colleagues in this kind of project. One address list could be developed from the Association of American Professors.

Next, how to structure such a meeting: The idea was advanced that perhaps representatives who are official spokespersons of a particular institutionalized religion might be even more viable than getting the top person of that religion. Official people have to take the stance which represents the kind of orthodoxy of their particular faith; they may not have so much ability to have give and take freely. Perhaps it is a good idea to work with secondary-echelon people of the religions, and then, through them, interesting the top people. Also, we were thinking of the urgency beyond just getting together and talking about religion and what's different in your religion and my religion, that we transcend that to some humanitarian goals, such as the urgency of the global situation, to evoke from the religions how the world is to survive.

Dr. Kliever further explored Dr. Rubenstein's idea about the place of religion in a technological world addressing itself to subjects such as world hunger, political forms, humanitarian efforts, disease, and ecosystems. We suggest to develop this conference on ways by which religion can answer the questions of the problems of the world.

Tom Walsh (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): Our discussion began with Dr. Malik, who reiterated some comments he made yesterday. He wanted to know if we are serious about this proposal or if this is a joke. Then he made a distinction between a "congress of the world religions" and a "world religious conference," saying he wasn't so positive about having anything to do with the latter. Next he suggested that we spend six months inquiring into the existing world religions to see if they're interested in participating in some way. We should not send letters to them, he said, but delegations. People don't respond to letters as well as they respond to people. He mentioned approximately 15 world religions. He said we need to go to the Pope, the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and heads of ecumenically-oriented groups, such as the World Council of Churches, the Presbyterian Church, the Southern Baptist Church, the Methodists, and the chief of rabbis of the world. We would also want to send our delegation to the leaders in Iraq, to leaders of Buddhism and Hinduism, and to well-disposed Marxists. Dr. Bahm suggested further that we look into Theravada Buddhism and Jainism to complete the list. Dr. Boslooper mentioned the World Congress of Faiths in England, and Dr. Bahm named the World Fellowship of Faith and some other groups which have already initiated such plans. He mentioned Sri Aurobindo and the interreligious city, Pondicherry, India. Then, Dr. Young Oon Kim urged Dr. Bahm to answer as to why previous efforts were ineffective. We agreed that this issue is an important one to think about. Then, Dr. William S. Minor reiterated that we should not alienate ourselves from efforts that are already being made, such as the American Academy of Religion. His final point was that he is impressed with some of the students at the Unification Seminary. He suggested that, perhaps at the next conference, there be a committee to say what's going on at the Seminary. Finally, Dr. Boslooper asked how we might relate to the other groups and how we could initiate some kind of rapport with them. Dr. Minor suggested that people like Mr. Warder and Mr. Wojcik act as delegates to the other conferences, for example the American Academy of Religion, which is meeting right here in San Francisco just after Christmas. Then Mrs. Stewart, dean of the Seminary, asked for suggestions as to who might co-sponsor the Congress; Dr. Minor volunteered to look into that.

Warren Lewis: Number three.

Paul Sharkey: The first issue raised was where to hold such a meeting. The East-West Center was suggested; someone else said it might not be a particularly appropriate place to hold a meeting on world religions, due to the Center's own particular concerns. Who would be involved in the conference was the next question. Being a philosopher, I was wondering how we would go about deciding whom, before we raise the meta-question of how we would decide who would decide who should be involved. The suggestion was made that we contact people in seminaries, people like Krister Stendahl, dean of the Divinity School at Harvard, who, whether or not they might participate themselves, would be particularly valuable in terms of their knowledge of religion and insight in selecting those individuals who would best participate and be sponsors.

The issue of sponsorship then arose. It was suggested that academic institutions which are state-supported could not be reasonably expected to be sponsors for what, to most of us, seemed obvious political, practical reasons. However, given the fact that the Unification Seminary has taken on this very admirable project, it was suggested that perhaps we should look to other theological seminaries which would bring a kind of respectability. Seminaries and universities—not the Pope, or the Cardinals, or the Bishop of Canterbury—are places where, as I see it, religion is made. I'm a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, and I know that Catholicism is made there, not Rome. Eventually, it ends up in Rome. The heresy of the theological seminaries becomes the orthodoxy of the religion eventually; so, I think that we could look to these sorts of institutions who would be more willing to participate.

Because of their own respectability within their traditions, they might be able to convince the Popes, the Bishops of Canterbury, and so forth, of the usefulness of this sort of thing.

We also raised an issue whether the conference should be devoted entirely or primarily to issues of theology; but I strongly suggest, just as we have enjoyed the unifying experience of last night's entertainment at this ICUS conference, that we include some kind of worship, or appreciation of the ways that each other worship. There are theological, philosophical, and emotional problems with such a thing, of course; so it was suggested that, at least, we could include the cultural, aesthetic dimension, the music, the ritual, the paraphernalia that go along with the religions. Whether or not one adopts the theology of another religion, one can't help but be impressed, as I was, by the Buddhist ceremonies I saw when I visited Thailand, or the celebration of a Mass. Not that we need to celebrate the liturgies, but we do want to share with each other the rich cultural and aesthetic aspects that go along with our religions.

The question was asked, what shall we call ourselves? Should we use the words "global religions?" What connotation is there in the plural use of "religions?" Should we stress, rather, the human spirit, using a Dickensian phrase such as "men of good will?" This would express the idea that the Congress may not be composed simply of individuals who identify themselves as religious, but also people who are of good will, who would be in spirit with this sort of enterprise, even though they do not identify themselves with any organized, institutionalized religion. I rather suspect that a lot of us feel religious but are not comfortable to express it in the context of existing religions. We just tough it out in the religion that we belong to, always unsatisfied. We need to include representatives of this kind as well as the church hierarchy; we have to have the leading edge at the theological, educational level. We also need to have not only people who identify themselves with specific religions, but people who are one in spirit with us but would not know how to categorize themselves. With respect to regional meetings, we want to hold a regional meeting in the Islamic world. Too little has been said about Islam and by Muslims yesterday and today. When we think in terms of religion, East and West, we tend to think of the Judeo-Christian tradition in the West and the great traditions of the East: Buddhism, Hinduism, and so forth. But there is in Africa a wealth of localized religions, which are not global, but very proud to be what they are; and there is Islam, which has not received its proper recognition among us. I invite anyone from my committee to make any additional comments.

Warren Lewis: Now we are entering into the last 30 minutes of this meeting, the hardest part of all. Now, we make 30-second comments. React, respond, disagree—anything goes. Say anything you want to say. I was a preacher for a good number of years and in a good number of churches. One of the most painful experiences of running a church is when you leave church after a good Sunday, thinking that everything has gone along swimmingly, only to return for Wednesday-night prayer meeting to discover that old Brother and Sister So-and-So have been mad as hops since Sunday. They just didn't tell you. So, I hope if anyone here is "mad," they'll say so.

Hank Thompson (Lecturer, Unification Theological Seminary): Your 30 seconds are up, Warren! (laughter)

Warren Lewis: You got it, Hank. Archie, you're next.

Archie Bahm: Just one suggestion. It takes money to run a world congress. My suggestion is this: with all the petro-dollars in Muslim countries right now, it should be obvious that they would be included among the co-sponsors.

Morton Kaplan (Professor of Political Science and Chairman of Committee on International Religions, University of Chicago): I want to emphasize what Professor Rubenstein said about humility, because there has been a minor theme throughout the conference that disturbs me. I do think that good will, human spirit, call it what you will, infuses decent behavior and just solutions to problems. But you would think the churches ought to have saved the Jews during the Second World War. That's one example. Let's look at the World Council of Churches, let's look at the fundamentalist groupings in the U.S., let's look at what the clergy did during the Vietnam War; even where there is an immediate injustice of that scope, as in much of Latin America, where some of the priests are going around with Communists, they're responding to something real; but in their naïveté, they will simply help to bring about a tyranny. I'm very alarmed by religious persons who, as religious persons, turn to practical problems. I would like us to stay away from that sort of thing.

Martin Choate (Director, Berkeley Area Interfaith Affairs Committee): I'm afraid I feel the exact opposite. One thing we do not need is another talky-talky convention. This is what the A.A.R. and the S.S.S.R. do. This was the death, really, of the ecumenical movement: the World Council of Churches tried to establish Christian unity; they got together, they talked about doctrinal differences and doctrinal similarities, and eventually it just got all bogged down. Dr. Bellah emphasized so strongly the affirmation we have on page two of this proposal and the idea that either we ought to provide leadership for the new age or somebody else will. It seems to me that the whole Congress should be oriented towards this. It's good to talk about our differences and similarities, it's good to share culturally and worshipfully; we should do all of this. But I think the purpose of the Congress and the thing that it should be oriented around are questions such as these (and these I've extrapolated out of the statement of principles that we've got here): What are the real material and spiritual problems of modern, civilized man? What do we have yet to learn that will help us come to terms with man's problems, that a religious tradition other than our own could teach us? What can we do individually or in our own religious groups, and what can we do together as a Congress of religions? I'm Martin Choate, president of Berkeley Area Interfaith Council, which is kind of a microcosm of this proposal, because it is a group that includes representatives from all the major world's religious traditions.

Kurt Johnson (Biologist, City University of New York; Committee member "National Council of Church and Social Action"): This is a practical remark. We've done two conferences on the Church and social action at Fordham and Georgetown. The group is predominantly Black. I just want to note here that our consciousness is predominantly White and somewhat Asian. I want to say that if we're going to have a conference or council that is successful in reaching Black-conscious religions, we'll have to do our homework and make special efforts. They will not come in by gravity, because there's a problem here that is economic and social. If we make a special effort, we'll get their participation; but I just want to make that very clear. I know it's true.

Hank Thompson: We don't need to exclude organized religions, and we don't need to exclude individual participation. We can have both or all. We don't want to exclude any people. A global concern is, by definition, inclusive. We can't compel an organized group to participate but we can certainly make it clear that they are welcome, in whatever form they wish, to participate. They can send an official representative or simply an unofficial kind of observer. We don't need to put down organized religion as being useless or out-of-date or anything like this. And, on the other hand, we can also extend our invitation as widely as possible in terms of the human spirit or the religious concern, whether a person does or does not belong to a specific, organized group.

Paul Sharkey: I'd like to support what Professor Thompson has just said. I've been working in my own little way in what is Catholic mission territory, Mississippi. They're discovering there that when the church hierarchy does find out what the laity has to say, they learn a great deal about the religion. I think it's absolutely essential that we have both kinds of people present. And I suspect it has been the case, at least in our experience there, that the hierarchy will learn something from the people who claim to belong to the traditions.

Warren Lewis: Historically speaking, that's what conciliarism finally got to before it was given the papal coup de grâce.

Bill McClellan (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): I'd like to suggest that we don't need to choose between the practical orientation and the theological or theoretical orientation. Our subgroups could take off in their chosen direction but check in with each other and say, "How you doing' over there? Is it working, or isn't it?" In this way, different kinds of minds and orientations could learn from one another.

Warren Lewis: Lonnie Kliever and then Constantine Tsirpanlis, but first Therese.

Therese Stewart (Academic Dean, Unification Theological Seminary): I am interested in the brief interchange between Professor Kaplan and Mr. Choate. I wonder if we could ask Dr. Kaplan to comment just a little bit further. If he thinks we should not get into certain kinds of practical problems, what might he then see as the possible role or function of the group?

Morton Kaplan: I think there are a lot of things in our current society which are counterproductive on which we might be able to agree and maybe even learn something. For instance, the way children are educated in the school has a great deal to do with much of the bad we find happening in society. For instance, about 15 years ago, when little kids were throwing gasoline bottles at drunken derelicts in New York, the mother's response was, "What will my neighbors think?" not, "What did my kid do that was wrong?" Or, "Why, of course, my kid shouldn't have done it; but, after all, haven't we always told them that we ought to get rid of bums; why are the police bearing down so hard on *us*?" I would rather go about the problems indirectly. I think that most religious people, except those who are really working deeply in it, don't understand most of these problems. Many use social activities to substitute for religion. I think the real difficulty is how to infuse the religious attitude into society, to get rid of the false individualism according to which we are atomized and separated from each other. This is the long-range aspect of a solution that religions genuinely can contribute, because it's really far more germane to their nature and to the abilities of the people who go into the priesthood.

Warren Lewis: Thank you, Dr. Kaplan. Lonnie and then Constantine.

Lonnie Kliever: The statement is a working document, as you've indicated. I would hope that at least four statements would be reworded or eliminated. Let me simply mention them without extended comment. On page one, I don't know why co-existence can't be the goal of this kind of congress, particularly if we understand co-existence as involving finding ways through consensus and compromise to living with our variety of conflicts, short of war. I'm amazed, and I've shared this with my friend Warren, that at the bottom of the page, no mention is made of the role that the religions have played and do play in fracturing the human family. There must be some acknowledgment in redress of that. On page two, there are some of us who are reductionists and materialists of a kind, but who are also religious and concerned about extending the human community of discourse and cooperation. We also feel very uncomfortable in the presence of militarists. I would rather see that statement reworded to talk about the political and economic forces unifying the world in a technological civilization and then raise the question, what does religion have to contribute, and what form it might take. Finally, on page five, I get uneasy when I read about sharing information on the techniques of propaganda against common ideological enemies, because I suspect I'm one of the enemies! (laughter)

Warren Lewis: Excellent. Constantine, Stillson Judah, and then Dr. Minor.

Constantine Tsirpanlis: I am Professor of Church History, Orthodox Theology, and ecumenical Christianity at the Unification Seminary. I am remembering right now the initial remark of Archbishop Germanos, when the World Council of Churches opened its first Session in 1910. At that time, all the people were thoroughly divided and deeply pessimistic about the purpose and the results of the World Council of Churches' ecumenical movement. They almost left the 1910 meeting with the conviction that no other meeting would take place after 1910. But we see today that the World Council of Churches or the ecumenical movement is so flourishing that, to a certain extent, it is also decaying and going down. The remark was, at that time, by Archbishop Germanos, the Archbishop of Thyatira in England of the Ecumenical

Patriarchate of Constantinople, and he said, "One great thing which cannot be forgotten by those who study ecumenical Christianity and the World Council of Churches is, although mind may divide us, heart unites us." The ecumenical brotherhood which has decayed is not a new thing. It is the Stoic concept of universal brotherhood. I was disappointed by this discussion; no one pointed out the failure of the historic concept of universal brotherhood. Why did it fail? Because the universal brotherhood of Stoicism was based solely and only on reason. It was not based on heart. Now, I think that what we need desperately in our days and in our time is perhaps a reconciliation and harmony of reason and heart. Up to this point in time, I cannot see any movement which achieved this harmony and reconciliation between reason and heart, or reason and faith. Religion is not an abstract idea. It is a personal involvement and conviction. But religion is not something which must be in a museum, which is exactly the contemporary situation. It is a museum piece, a museum relic! What we need is to apply religion to socio-political, as well as to economic, contemporary needs and situations. From my point of view, this harmony and the reconciliation between reason and heart will be a distinguishing characteristic of this global forum for world religions. Perhaps I am mistaken. I'm not dogmatic, but this is my deepest conviction, and I share this conviction with several representatives at this conference. I was so happy that several representatives, at least, felt the same need and the same deep nostalgia for this reconciliation and harmonious cooperation between reason and heart.

Warren Lewis: I recognize Stilson, then Dr. Minor, and then... Archie, if you're leaving to go get a hamburger, we'll have food here...But of course! Archie's leaving to catch a plane, not a hamburger. Goodbye!

Stillson Judah (Professor of Religious History, Graduate Theological Union): I am very much impressed with this whole idea, and also with the ideas that Dr. Bellah expressed yesterday. I agree with the particular stress which Mr. Choate placed on the need for a congress of religions which is not going to duplicate the type of things being done by other, different associations. Actually, I hope it will be an application of religion to the great and important problems of the world. I study and work with the youth-religions of America; one of the reasons why we have these youth-religions in America is that the Christian churches themselves—of which I also am a member—are not doing the job that the youth of America are doing or are trying to do. I see people in the Hare

Krishna movement now trying to unite all the youth of America, to establish what they feel are the new-age ideals for America—a new religious consciousness, a new way of looking at things; they are trying to solve some of the problems in the world. I see the same thing also in the case of the Unification Church; right here in this area, they are solving the food problem in this particular area, distributing 30 tons of food a week. This is important; there isn't a single traditional church in this area doing this job. I think that practical application of religion is very important. This must come, then, not from delegates of the churches, but must come from religiously-committed people in all the various religions, including all of the so-called cults.

William Minor (Director, Foundation for Creative Philosophy, Carbondale, Illinois): I would just like to reinforce what Dr. Kaplan has said about attitude. An attitude, as we well know, is a predisposition to action. It triggers action. And unless we have the religious attitude, we don't get the kind of action which is really basic to religious living. The action comes out where we find the religious attitude. I find the attitude in these young people whom I have met here in this conference. They have it; and if we can get the freshness of their spirit in the religious attitude that's genuine, that triggers action, then, I think we need not worry about consequences.

Warren Lewis: Thank you, Dr. Minor. Two more, after that.

Michael Herbers (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): I would like to bring it back to religion again. We've oftentimes been speaking in philosophical terms; but I am thinking that, since we are going to approach other religions, we ought to consider the touchstones, the basic things, of reaching out to other religions. I have studied the Faith and Order Movement and the Life and Works struggle of the last 60 years. We obviously have a long way to go both in terms of doctrinal unity (if that were our course) and in practical cooperation; but I am thinking of certain basic points, such as the affirmation that there is a God, that God does exist (for the West anyway) and at least the affirmation (in the East) that there is some deeper aspect to man than just a material, chemical, physical being, call it the recognition or striving for "ultimate meaning" or "value" perhaps. Secondly, if we accept the notion that God (or ultimate ground of meaning, etc.) does in fact exist, not just as a useful, ethical point of view, the next thing is to allow that all the world's religions are in fact legitimate and so inspired by God; or, we can say each religion has at its origin and continues in its core—in its gut—a real religious (spiritual) experience. It's not just Christianity, but all religions are inspired according to the need. Thirdly, the idea of progressive revelation: that revelation did not stop 4000 years ago with Moses, or 2500 years ago with Buddha, or 2000 years ago with Jesus, or 400 years ago with Luther and Calvin. I think if we have basic points like these, then we can recognize that all religions have legitimacy and can begin to come together without bickering and doctrinal rankling. This also opens up the idea that indeed today we do need a fresh look, and not just tradition. The point about leadership on page two is vital. We ourselves have to begin to project a certain attitude—as Dr. Minor just said—a certain moral responsibility, if we're to talk about religious action. Perhaps points similar to these three can be a basis to tap the legitimacy of each religion's motivation to offer such cooperative leadership for our troubled world. Thank you.

Nathan Ballou: My name is Nathan Ballou. I'm out of my field, but I would just like to make a brief remark. It seems to me a focus of such an activity needs to be what the ideals are of people over the earth: what they hope, what they want out of life, what their relationships with humanity are, and with their God. Therefore, the question of ideals is central. Secondly, there is the question whether or not the objectives, the movement, the conference are to be all-inclusive? Toward this purpose, as I mentioned in our own particular [ICUS] session, I think that we need to consider the human spirit, rather than restricting it more to religion. This means, I emphasize, not that we are excluding religion. Religion is a part, a major, important, extremely important part; but the human spirit is something that people can respond to over the earth, whether or not they are affiliated with a religion. We need to proceed in such a way as to capture the popular imagination by what we are doing, so that there is real body and substance and motion toward what might be accomplished.

Warren Lewis: I'll add another thirty seconds worth, and bring this part to an end. I'm out of my role as moderator, just adding my 30 seconds' worth. We absolutely have to make clear from beginning to end that the religionists are as evil as the technologists, that the atheists are as holy as the theists, that the Marxists are as welcome as the shamans. This is a human enterprise in the name of reality perceived religiously, whatever the sociological and psychological forms are into which you pour that religiosity. I want *nobody* to say who else is to be there or not be there. I want people to be there because they feel they have a right to be there. The credentials are in the people who come, not in the hosts who do the inviting.

This is the end of the 30-second session. I'm in my role as moderator again. Lunch is now to be served; everyone in this room is welcome to eat. There are many kinds of unity and unification, and the one we all know about is the one where we sit together at the same table and eat. That's the one I enjoy best. There's another kind of unity—the kind where you sweat together; and we've certainly attained that today. When you work hard on a common project, even on different sides of it, and from different perspectives, sometimes carrying different weight, even though one person may have the lighter end and another person the heavier end, still you're together because you have sweat together. My father taught me that on our Texas ranch. Now, I wish I could come forth with something uplifting and inspirational to say at the end, because that's what a preacher is supposed to do; but, for the life of me, I cannot. Let me just stay practical then. Looks like the ball is in our court, at Unification Seminary, in terms of the nuts and bolts of the thing. We will prepare a transcript of the proceedings, we will edit it somewhat, for the sake of keeping it manageable in terms of the length. If you want a copy, I hope you've signed your name and given us your address. I reassure you that your name will not be used in any kind of legitimating, political way as a result of your participation in this conference, although we do intend to send you a list of the names of the participants. I'm not sure what the next step is, myself, and certainly not sure what the next giant step needs to be. The next baby step is to make sure that every one among ourselves knows what we did here. We have documents we can work on, and we can continue to communicate with one another. Certainly, among the next steps are that we act upon the concrete proposals made here by you; and I think that is what Unification Seminary will do. But, of course, we have to talk it over with the Reverend Moon first. What can I do but thank you and say, let's eat. (Applause)

BARRYTOWN

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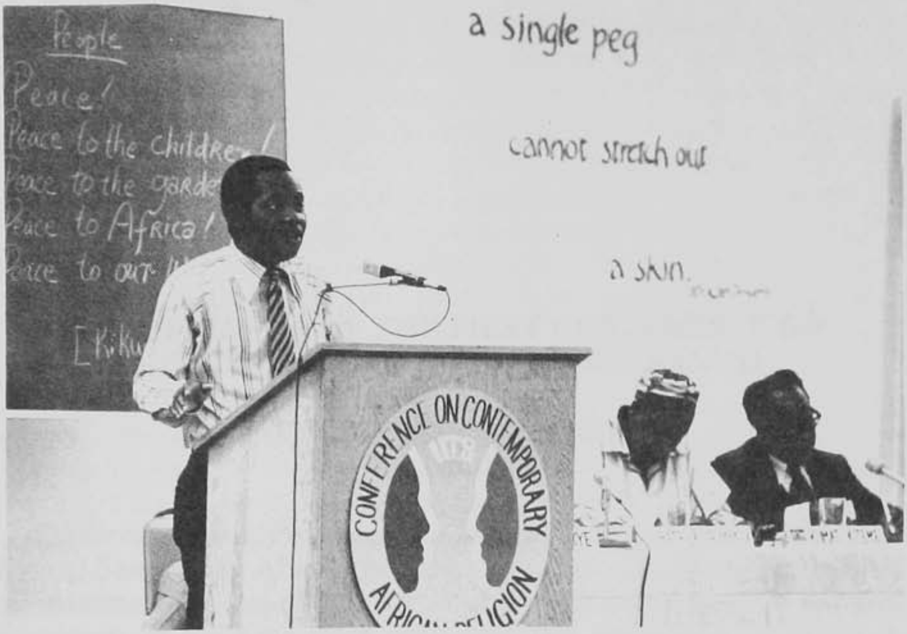
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CONFERENCE ON CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN RELIGION

Dr. William R. Jones, Dr. James Deotis Roberts, Dr. Warren Lewis, Dr. Francis Botchway, Rev. Shawn Byrne, Rev. Victor Wan-Tatah

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE ON CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN RELIGIONS

Friday Afternoon Session

May 26, 1978

Warren Lewis (Professor of Church History, Unification Theological Seminary): About two years ago now, Mr. Moon, by way of an intermediary, asked me if I would undertake a project with the Seminary. If the time were right, and the world was ready for it, would I organize a global congress of the world's religions. And I replied, "Sure, I don't have anything else to do this afternoon! Why not?" (Laughter) It was so audacious, so astronomical in concept, that if I failed, it would prove nothing about my incapacities. Other, greater people have tried and failed. There have been steps along the way: 1893, 1936, and there are a variety of contemporary groups: the World Council of Churches, the Temple of Understanding, the World Congress of Faiths, to name a few. Most of you have already received a transcript of our San Francisco conference where all of this was discussed in a preliminary way. Our asking you to come to Barrytown to confer with one another about Africa has a twofold purpose: 1) to stage what, for us Barrytowners, would be a very educational conference on Africa so that we can purely and simply learn something; 2) to help us with our plan for the global congress. We believe that one of the best ways to go global is via Africa. In terms of the spirituality and religious understanding of Mr. Moon, our attention is focused on Africa. In terms of what we see going on there politically and culturally, and in terms of what Mr. Moon calls "the failure of Christianity," we see that the religious future of Africa controls the human future of the globe.

Everybody has an eschatology; some people admit it, others do not; my personal eschatology of the global congress, which I suspect none of my colleagues here nor Mr. Moon share, is that we shall hold the first meeting of it in 1981 in Moscow! Stages along the way, I hope, are this mini-congress here in Barrytown, and, if you agree and are willing to think with us, plan with us, and work with us, a congress of the religions of Africa to be held in Africa in the near future. If you think that is a good idea, as a lot of people think it is, if you can somehow agree with us, then there are all kinds of plans we have to think about: When and where in Africa? Who comes and who does not come to it? (If there is anybody who should not.) Who sponsors it? Obviously, the Unification Theological Seminary wants to be one of the co-sponsors. We recognize from the outset that we have certain political problems, what with the bad press about Mr. Moon and the Unification Movement. So, not only because we are well aware that we lack the resources, as a single institution, to organize something on this scale but also, quite frankly, for political reasons we are open to co-sponsorship with the right people and the right institutions. We are communicating with the Temple of Understanding; a member of its board of directors sits at the table with us today. Just yesterday I received this letter from Professor K. L. Seshagiri Rao, who says:

> Dear Professor Lewis:
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> Many thanks for your transcript of the proceedings of the "World Religions Conference" held in San Francisco. I have gone through the material with great interest.
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> I welcome your proposal for a Global Congress of World Religions as well as intermediate conferences leading to it. As one activity involved in the dialogue of religions for the last fifteen years, I am aware of the problems involved in such a venture; I also know that history is inexorably leading all of us in that direction. I eagerly look forward to future developments in this regard.
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> At present I see my role as a member of the "International Society of Scholars" [a body, the founding of which we proposed in the transcript of our San Francisco Conference], which will discuss and publish issues related to the concerns of Global Congress. As a Hindu, I may also be of some help in identifying and making a list of Hindu scholars and organizations that may be interested in participating in the Congress. With cordial greetings,
>
> Sincerely yours,
>
> Professor Rao

He also sent us the latest issue of *Insight,* of which he is the editor. *Insight* is the official organ of the Temple of Understanding. That, to me, is a wonderful letter! I have talked to some other folk at the Temple of Understanding and am personally convinced that if the Temple of Understanding cannot see its way clear to cooperate, co-sponsor with us, then we are probably on the wrong track. The Temple of Understanding is probably the most prestigious and sensible inter-religious body in the United States. Certainly the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches from the Christian side have been active in this direction, but the Temple of Understanding, in terms of its history and activity in global ecumenics, is an interreligious body and is the outstanding leader in this direction. This is where you folk can be so helpful, not only as scholars, but as ecumenical politicians. We are trying to make it as clear as possible to all our potential colleagues that we intend a fully collegial co-sponsorship; we want to co-operate with other people. This is a seriously intended next step towards the global culture of people who mutually respect and understand that pluralism not only is the status quo but also ought to continue in a diversity as rich as the cultures which comprise it. There is the question of the willingness of the World Council of Churches to co-operate with us because of the troubled relationship of the Unification Church with the National Council of Churches. There are other, more globally ecumenical people in the international Christian organization besides the four who wrote the "Faith and Order" paper against the Unification Movement. I assume that those four do not speak for the entire body. In a sense, this is the least difficult question.

There is the question of how properly and politically to proceed, as we invite organized religions and individual religionists to official representation at a gathering such as this. These people come from bodies which have traditional hostilities towards one another and historic animosities. But a Global Congress will not be global if everybody is not represented. Muslims and Christians will be there. White Dutch Calvinists from South Africa will be there, for they too are religious, sitting across the table from Black African religionists. Immediately I can foresee the possibility that certain Black interests might want to boycott the meeting, and I can understand why they would want to. These kinds of political problems will rear their hydra heads at every turn. The Coptic Christians, both the autochthonous and the indigenized religions of Africa will be there, as will be lately-come missionaries. Then, there is the tricky question of Marxists, of whatever stripe. Not all Marxists are alike. There are blood-thirsty Mau-Maus, but then there is also a socialist point of view which has immediate affinity with African tribal culture. I hold that people of the Marxist persuasion must also be there: they too are a religion; they too are a part of Africa; they too are a part of the globe.

That is what we have in mind. Our agenda was never a hidden one. The people seated at the table with you have been studying all this and working for two years now on these plans. I want us, this afternoon, in an informal way, to brainstorm the idea. Feel free to express your hesitations; indeed, the floor is open to any and all comments.

We sit at this table as a group of people who come from widely divergent religious traditions, and some come from a non-religious religious tradition. Yet, whatever the word "religion" means, we have it in common. I hope that today, tomorrow and Sunday will be not only a conference on religions, but also a religious conference. This is not the usual academic exercise, though we are all academics, and many of you are distinguished academics. We academics so frequently do our work in contexts where we must ride herd on our religious passions, perhaps because we are afraid of ridicule by our peers, or there may be the assumption that a person who is religiously passionate cannot be academically objective. I know that in my case, this is not so: I am both academically objective and religiously passionate, and I suspect you would say the same thing about yourself. Bill Jones, I read your book today; a Unitarian-Universalist, passionate religionist is what you are! Just because it doesn't look like my Texas fundamentalism, doesn't mean that it ain't religious, does it? (Laughter) Whatever your religious passion is, share it with us without any hesitation. It will be cherished and loved, as you will be cherished and loved. Be as academic and objective as you have got it within you, and be as passionate and religious as you feel comfortable to be.

William Jones (Director, Black Studies Program, Florida State University): I'll raise the first question: What do you envisage as appropriate parameters for the Congress on African Religion? It is to be a sort of microcosm of the larger congress on world religions?

Warren Lewis: I like your word "microcosm." The diversity of Africa's religions is analagous to the global religious situation. If we cannot convene a congress in Africa, we certainly cannot do it for the whole world. There is a kind of freshness to Africa. I am convinced that as we proceed towards the Global Congress, the right way to build momentum is to go outside of Europe and North America. I would like to see us hold a similar mini-congress in Latin America and another in Southeast Asia. These would be intermediate stages towards the Global Congress.

William Jones: Are you attempting to bring together the various units which could be identified in some way as expressions of African Religion, or is it an attempt to pull together a microcosm of all the world religions? There is a slightly different nuance there.

Warren Lewis: I think we would want to focus on Africa.

William Jones: That was the image I was getting. The Africa congress focuses on Africa, the Global Congress would be more embracing.

Victor Wan-Tatah (Presbyterian Minister from Loso, Cameroon, and Graduate Student at Harvard Divinity School): I think the same way. If we have any good reason for taking the conference to Africa, it should be because we want to emphasize the peculiar characteristics, the special traditions which come out of African religion. The diversity of African religions (there is a way of talking about "African religion" and "African religions") epitomizes the diversity of world religions. Yet, in putting together these diversities, we come up with something distinctly African.

William Jones: When we pull together an invitation list for African religion, or African religions, how would it differ from the invitation list for the World Congress?

Warren Lewis: There are Hindus in Africa, but something tells me that Hinduism would not be one of our major concerns in a conference on Africa.

Victor Wan-Tatah: In Asia, of course, you would have Hindus well represented; but when we talk of African religion in Africa, we must make the distinction between "African religion" and the "African Christian expression" of African religion. Unfortunately, most of the writers on African religion are Christians; so it is very difficult for many people to disassociate their contribution as Africans from their identity as Christians. This often beclouds the true nature of African religion. African religion does not stand on its own right, so that when people talk about African religions they often tend to be apologetic as though they have something to be sorry about and to compensate for, since African religion is thought not equal to the other religions.

Francis Botchway (Professor of International Law and Political Science, University of Cincinnati): I think the question, Bill (Jones) has raised is extremely important. You talk about "African religion," and you talk about "African religionists." Now which group are you talking about? Are you talking about the African religionists who are also Christian Catholics, Anglicans who are writing about traditional African religions, or are you talking about the practitioners? If you want the authentic practitioners of African religions to be involved in this conference, you might not be able to find them unless you go to Idowu, Gaba, and the rest. At what level are we really talking? Do we invite people who are African religionists, authentic practitioners of African religions, or those who have written on the subject academically? If you rely on contemporary scholars, you will be having a Christian expression of African religion rather than African expression of Christianity.

William Jones: That is part of what I have been trying to get at. I see the Global Congress in some sense affirming by its very existence the religious pluralism of the earth. Therefore, the African mini-congress would affirm the same reality in an essential way. But I must raise the question of the availability of authentic expressions of indigenous African religion. It is not clear to me at this point whether we have a whole bunch of those materials together. Much of what has been written about African religion, according to my understanding, has a certain Western taint to it. One function which this mini-congress might serve, is to help develop that authentic voice of African religion so that it becomes an authentic participant in the global dialogue. It cannot be an authentic participant unless we take the time and effort to develop the unique point of view that this culture represents.

Victor Wan-Tatah: The point which Dr. Francis (Botchway) raised should be taken care of too. If we want to get the real, African, authentic practitioners, we should go beyond the present writings which we have on African religions. As you said, most of them are Western, tainted and clothed in Western images, and there is some element of Western thought in them. If we want to know what truly special contributions African religions offer, we should go back to the sources, to the people who practice the religions in the villages. Idowu is one of the people who advocate a return to the field, to meet the older "babalawo," the elders, the priests, and the people who can let them see what has been going on.

Warren Lewis: Someday I will learn to trust my visions. What you have just described is a dream I have had. I dreamed that we were in Africa, where somehow, someway, in an African village, there was a great open space; it was under a very hot sun, and the dirt was baked hard. There was a variety of Europeans, Americans, other Westerners and technological Africans, university Africans, who came to this village. I saw us sitting on the ground on the dirt in the dust of this hot African afternoon with the elders of the tribe. The person who spoke for the guests said, "We have come to your village this afternoon to ask the advice of the elders. How can we have a world which is as peaceful as your village?" I don't know if there are any peaceful villages in Africa. I may have quite a romantic Americanized view of an African tribal village, but my vision seems similar to what we are saying. However, it occurs to me that one does not take 500 people to an African village, where there are four or five elders, does one? One way we might do it is to divide the participants into small groups and send them all over Africa. After they have sat with the elders of forty different tribes, then they could come together somewhere for the congress.

Francis Botchway: We need to identify the crystal of authentic African religions, people who are the practitioners of religion itself. If you want to look up Ifa divination, you need to have an Ifa priest. If you want to look at the practices of the Gã, you have to talk to the chief priests, the Mairomo, of the Gã. If you want to look at the religion of the Ibo and the Fons in Dahomey, you may want to look at the priests, the Bukakan. If you could identify all of these people, perhaps we could get them into a dialogue situation, a protracted platonic-socratic dialogue with their African Euro-Christian counterparts. Let me illustrate: I was in Ghana some years back, to do a study of the role of the chief priest among the Gãs. I am an elder, and we look back to our ancestry coming from the Yoruba; so I wanted to trace all these things back. I was interested in the Ifa. I asked a colleague of mine in the Psychology Department at the University of Ghana to go with me to the chief. I wanted to tape a conversation with him. Kwame (Gyekye) has been doing similar work in that field. But our colleagues at the University often do not want to go back to a village, sit down with an elderly person, interview him, tape him. I suggested once that we should have a series of historians in residence at the University, not from Oxford and Cambridge, but people who know the entire history of their people. None of my colleagues at the University was interested, yet these are the people who put themselves forward as the authorities and want to represent the interests of these religions. They would want to interpret for you the cosmology and the ontology of the people. We ought to look at them very carefully and choose intermediaries with extreme caution.

Victor Wan-Tatah: In addition to this, we should also guard against the danger into which the World Council of Churches has fallen. The same people always attend their meetings; every other meeting, they are there. How can the World Council of Churches establish a measure for the success of their programs by the type of persons who attend the meetings they convene? Should not the participants in the dialogues be qualified by their leadership potential, their ability to mobilize their people and to interact with people of other living faiths? How can you expect a professor at a university, who is not willing to go to the village and work with the people of his own locality, to bring to their awareness the need for co-operating with other people who are not of their own kind of inclination? We should involve people who are in real leadership positions, people who know, people who are practicing.

William Jones: Do we not want to try to make the conference itself an actual working laboratory where we bring together the people who have the expertise and information, and let that setting be the environment in which something new emerges, gets written down and systematized? We would want to have preliminary studies and field work, of course, the results of which would be presented in the conference setting.

Francis Botchway: There is a tendency to ignore the non-literate, non-scriptural religions. If we are going to hold a world congress of religions, my opinion is that the non-scriptural religions, which basically are African religions, should not be omitted. Now, the next question is, how are these religions going to be represented? I suggest that we identify the authentic practitioners of these religions; but how we get their views to the conference is a different question. It might work to get a number of these people together, gather their views, systematize them, and then have them presented at a later congress. But I think these representatives of traditional African religion ought to be there themselves.

Kwame Gyekye (Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Ghana): As far as getting the views of these priests, there is a lot of material. The basic problem is one of analysis, interpretation, and the extent to which one is going to analyze these conceptual systems. Western scholars often try to force these African ideas into certain conceptual pigeon-holes. We will have abundant material; the problem is rather a problem of analysis, of different interpretations. And there are quite a number of researchers who do go to the villages. My friend, Asare Opoku, is an example of one who talks to the priests. But there are some problems. The priests are not willing to communicate. So what you have to do is ask some peripheral questions and then apply logical order to them, because they won't tell you what kind of powers they use or betray their secrets. It is not easy just to go in to the priest and get him to talk about what he does. There are a lot of books, but many of them were written two or three decades ago.

Victor Wan-Tatah: We do not want to follow the criteria that have been erected by Western scholarship which inhibit really effective analysis, effective research into the religions of Africa and African people. If we take into account that we are encountering people who are used to oral tradition, that we are dealing with people who have not been storing knowledge in a systematized way, then we won't discard most of the material which has been discarded in the past by people who use exclusively Western techniques. The methods we use, if we are not careful, are the very means through which we may destroy the work we want to do. If you read the work of somebody like John Mbiti, he is making a valuable critique of "African mercenary writers," of Christian writers who employ Western norms and techniques without the adequate criticism that an African-minded person would employ, a religious missionary kind of analysis. He is highly critical of this uncritical attitude, so we should also be cautious about systematizing and analyzing, almost following the methods of the West. We are dealing with another set of people who have something that is special to them and whose religious tradition is still in another stage of development.

Paul Freitas (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): This has come up wherever we discuss the planning for the congress. Do we include scholars or the spiritual leaders of these different religions? If we establish a steering committee or an international society of scholars who study the practitioners, then we get both a Western bias and also a scholar's bias. How do we bridge that gap? Most of the people who write get their education in Western institutions.

Deotis Roberts (Professor of Religion at Howard University School of Religion): I have been working with this problem for some years now, around the world. First of all, there is value in a dialogue between Africans and Asians, which we have not yet mentioned, because of the similarity of religious experience and thought in the third world, over against the first world. The Black experience is different from other Western experiences; there is a problem of communication, both internal communication and external communication, analysis, interpretation. We want to get to the experience, but then we want to lift it up, analyze, interpret it, so that it can be meaningfully shared by people outside the experiential group; I see that as a scholar's task. We are going to have a cross-fertilization between the practitioners at the grassroots level and the interpreters, with deep appreciation on both sides. I think the Temple of Understanding would be enthusiastic about this. I have been trying to get them to Africa for a long time now; they have always had the excuse that they could not find the practitioners of religion. This would solve their problem.

Warren Lewis: Let me respond to what Dr. Roberts has just said. I accept the correction about the Asians present at an Africa congress. That is something I do not yet see; but as I listen to you, I sense you are right. Mr. Moon is himself an Asian, of course, and thus a person with an Asian religious perspective. According to my paper read at the American Academy of Religion last December, he comes to the global community from the background of Korean shamanism. He is a man who can instantly appreciate what is going on for a tribal priest who has his jiu-jiu tree and his ceremonies of power. A second point about Mr. Moon's perspective is that he, too, understands the unavoidable usefulness of the scholar in this matter. He sees this as a conference of scholars who are also religious, who are reverential of the religious realities we are studying. We can respect, appreciate, and cherish those fragile traditions; we do not have to kill in order to investigate, do we? We are not "hard" scientists; we are participant observers.

Deotis Roberts: Let me give one more comment: In India, I found that the way to get to the village priest was not to go directly to him. A scholar trained in his own culture as well as Western thought, like Idowu in Africa, could be an intermediary. Because of his language ability and identification with the priest, such a scholar could interpret the symbols; he could become an intermediate person between me and the experience which alone I could not penetrate.

Warren Lewis: The identification of a number of such persons would be essential, it seems. Is it not true that some of you Africans are already in that intermediary position? You speak languages I don't speak, and you know people and temples that I don't.

William Jones: There is a crucial decision to be made regarding the perspective that should be represented at this conference. One way to do it is to think in terms of a conference on third-world religions in which we mix the African and Asian perspectives. Another way to do it is somewhat narrower, namely keeping an African perspective exclusively.

Deotis Roberts: In working with some of the Ph.D. candidates for the African Studies Department at Howard and reading their theses, my feeling is that one of the limitations was that they did not have, just by studying African religions in that context, an appreciation for the study of religion as religion; the kind of thing that Charles Long writes about, which is crucial for an in-depth understanding of any religious experience anywhere in the world. I would see that as a kind of breakthrough for Africans to understand their own religions; to be able to compare their experience and interpretation of it with a limited number of people; to get to appreciate the fact that there are similarities between religions in the third world over against most of the interpretations found in the first world.

William Jones: I think something similar happened in Black theology, Deotis. It made some sense for Black theologians to step back a moment from dialogue with other religions, recognizing that the more we understand and know about other religions, the better we can articulate and understand our own. But there was a preliminary stage of development which required us to be somewhat narcissistic, somewhat introspective, to make sure that we got ourselves clarified.

Victor Wan-Tatah: Recently, a conference of third-world theologians took place in Ghana. They started out quite well; there were several controversies; there were difficulties but also affirmations, and resolutions which came out well. It is a kind of program which should be continued. One of the problems was that of distinguishing between Black theology and African theology. The theology of liberation is not all-embracing, all-encompassing; but African religion, which underlies African theology, is limited to Africa and African peoples. But the African theologians have not yet come up with that special thing which is their own, by which they can identify themselves. Different voices were heard in the African theological camp; it was difficult for the people to respond in a joint way to theologians from outside, for they had nothing with which to identify as essentially African. They are still struggling to formulate "African theology." Our program should include a preliminary setting of a first stage whereby people can develop their own identity, specific African theologies, and then eventually come together to try for the cross-pollination which we desire at the full-congress level.

Deotis Roberts: Do we not need to make a distinction between what we are about to do and theological dialogue? We want to cut through to the traditional African religious experience as the foundation point of the self-understanding of Africans. You have all kinds of varieties of theological interpretations. Once you get into theology, you can go to sea on the way traditional African experience is reflected in Islam, in Christian churches, and so on. But we want to cut through all of that to get to the normative foundation itself.

Victor Wan-Tatah: What is the aim of cutting through, if other people are engaged in a similar exercise, independently?

Deotis Roberts: We went through this when we first started talking about the Black religious experience. We were told that there is no such thing, that all Christian experiences, all religious experiences, are universal. We said "no," but at that time, we did not know how we were going to explain that to anybody but ourselves. But we knew that there is a living Black tradition with roots in Africa that we celebrate every Sunday morning in our churches, different from what we experience in White churches. Africans are finding this out too; there is something there that now has to be discovered, mined, and which, over a long period of time, will begin to take shape so we will be able to write about it and explain it to other people. What we are really after in the African setting we have to do in our own setting too.

Perry Cordill (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): We seem to be suggesting a three-stage or four-stage process. First, a preliminary conference to stimulate further study on African religion. Next, I think we could have an African conference on African religions. Because these religions have not been available to the world at large, the African contribution to world religions should be emphasized. Finally, we could have a third-world conference on top of that, which would foster dialogue between Africans and other third-world people.

William Jones: It is not clear to me whether there be a third-world religious perspective. To me, the "third world" is primarily a socio-political term rather than a religio-cultural term. But it is an intriguing question whether or not there is a common or unique religious perspective that can be identified with the third world. It is a fascinating idea to compare what we find in indigenous Africa with indigenous Asia, to see if there is another problem here. The moment we begin to talk about African religion, we have to recognize that part of the problem in identifying and articulating African religion is racism. I do not think it affects, clouds, or "disvalues" the character of other religions the same way it does with African religions. I do not know how to say more than that about it, but I think that whatever we do in setting up our methodology, the effects of racism need to be in the back of our minds.

Deotis Roberts: In Africa we are dealing with two things: liberation because of racism and some form of contextualization. I see a difference between African and Latin-American liberation theologians: the Latin-Americans are dealing with political liberation and are not touching the natural roots of indigenous religion among the Indian, Amerindian, and the people of African descent, in the same way that the Africans are. A process of indigenization is going on with Hinduism and Buddhism in Asia. Moltmann criticized liberation theologians for transporting the Marxist-Christian dialogue from Europe and transplanting it to Latin America without taking its own indigenous culture seriously. I see a common kind of methodological experience in what the Asians and Africans are doing but which does not exist in Latin America—liberation and contextualization going on at the same time.

Perry Cordill: In Latin America there are many appropriations from native religions: for example, in the processions, the saints, and the piety of the Catholic Church among the main body of the people. This could be studied.

William Jones: Unfortunately, one of the weaknesses of the indigenization going on in the Catholic tradition is that it can absorb a lot of the culture without tampering with the theology. This is not liberation which reorders the power structure and dynamics.

Phillip McCracken (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): I would like us to discuss the ultimate goal we are trying to achieve at the congress itself. We have to be aware that each one of the different religions has something to offer to the world culture. The goal of the congress ought to be a bringing out of different and complementary aspects of the world's religions so that in the future people can really come to appreciate the particular heritages of particular people.

William Jones: Any attempt to talk about a global congress of world religions means the affirmation of an authentic pluralism which respects the integrity of the worldview of these different faiths, primarily because of difficulty in trying to demonstrate that any one of them is truer or better than the other. We are pushed towards pluralism, because no one point of view can substantially establish its hegemony or sovereignty. But when you are in a situation like African religion, where for various reasons, an accurate and authentic picture of what that indigenous religion is has not yet been given to the world, it becomes necessary to step back and produce that picture. Though we are focusing in what appears to be a particularistic and even narcissistic manner, the necessity for that, and the goal towards which it aims, is towards a more pluralistic framework within which African religion can become a full partner in the ultimate dialogue. Until the time you can express the African worldview, it remains crippled in terms of being a participant in the dialogue.

Phillip McCracken: It seems to me that part of the nature of religion is to heal wounds. Healing, in order to create a new world culture, has to begin in the religious communities. The Global Congress is the place where we can feel and accept that certain wounds have been inflicted and can then begin to heal those wounds.

William Jones: If you read the report that came out of San Francisco, you will see I argued quite strongly that any attempt of the world religions as a whole to solve the pressing problems of the world requires that the religions examine themselves as part of the problem. Any failure on the part of world religions to do that simply makes them a continuing part of the problem. To talk about a congress of world religions is not simply to bring them together and say, "Look, look at the infinite variety of religious expressions in our common humanity!" That, to me, does not serve the purpose at all. We have to begin by searching out the types of division that have been perpetuated in religion, how religion has been infiltrated by racism, sexism, and intolerance.

Deotis Roberts: One problem is that Africa has been literally the Dark Continent in the minds of Western historians and scholars. Even Hegel wrote Africa out of history in his philosophy. His oversight is symbolic of how we have ignored the culture of Africa: We have really said that Africa does not have an authentic culture independent of what was brought to them from the West. We have treated everything, religion included, in that way. Just as the surgeon has to use a knife to clean out the wound so that healing can take place, it seems to me that, with reference to the African culture and religion, we have to open up the wounds before healing commences.

Victor Wan-Tatah: Do we realize that we are doing what some others are doing? The conference of third-world theologians is wrestling with some of these problems. If we had the documents which they came out with, together with the transcript of the San Francisco Conference, it would give us a working basis for what we want to achieve. If we set up another body working with aims similar to those third-world theologians who have already met, it is a kind of duplication, which emphasizes the contradictions in religious life which we aim to solve. That conference embraced so many theologians and other experts, whose expertise would help our congress. How does their conference stand vis-à-vis our own goals? Will we incorporate them? Are we following them? What do they stand for and what are they working towards? Do we want to start something else with bigger dimensions but to arrive at the same destination?

Deotis Roberts: I am reviewing the results of that conference for the American Academy of Religions Review. My impression is that what we are doing here is not quite the same thing. They were trying to make whatever they found in Africa or Asia compatible with their understanding of the Christian faith. I think that is not at all the same task which we propose, namely getting at the indigenous experience and understanding what it is all about. It can be interpreted in a Christian sense. But first of all, we must discover what is the African religious experience.

Victor Wan-Tatah: I think you are right; but I would like to disagree with you. I also read the documents: I think a good section of the final report is given to African religions. They also address the problems, the economic and political problems, which religions have contributed to in Africa, which made the arising of African religions difficult if not impossible and which called then for what we call "liberation theology." I discussed this with someone who attended the conference; he indicated to me that they are not oblivious to the questions we are addressing.

William Jones: Are you suggesting that something on the order of what we are talking about here would be an unnecessary duplication? Or rather, you are saying that whatever we do, we should attempt to build upon and incorporate those previous efforts.

Victor Wan-Tatah: Something like that.

Francis Botchway: I agree with what Deotis is saying about indigenous African religion. Perhaps we ought to convene a working conference of African scholars, not theologians per se, but African scholars who have written on African religion and not African expressions of Christianity, and see if we can get out of this group some sort of consensus as to what the best methodology would be for understanding African religion. It would be too much for us to go back to Africa and start interviewing every priest. I think we wouldn't get very far; and, as Kwame (Gyekye) was saying, quite often it is very difficult to get anything out of these priests. But if we can get some of the scholars who have already done this kind of research in the field to get together with us, we might be able to come up with a document, a general statement from these people of some of the basic principles and views of African religion. That would be the first methodological step before we move towards a subcontinental conference on African religion.

Victor Wan-Tatah: Most of the people who have written on African religion are Christians. When we talk of African religion, we easily refer to Mbiti, Shorter, Parrinder. All of these people are working within the church. There are very few people outside Christian circles who have written on African religion. We should not ignore the contribution of theologians, for those people are taking the realities seriously of doing theology in Africa. That does not mean we should not take into cognizance the contribution of other people who are not theologians per se. They too should be incorporated in the working process. These people have already occupied themselves with the kinds of questions we are wrestling with, too. We may not necessarily have to go to priests and the people who live the religions to get the authentic information, for that is fraught with difficulties; but it is possible for us to get something more, supplementary information to that which has already been written. It has been rightly suggested that some local historian could best interpret the expression of African religion in his locality. One of the stages in our venture would be to go out and meet some of the people who have been practicing African religion and, at the same time, allow the interpreters to tell us what this language of the divinity means. Thus, we can understand and transmit their religions in human terms.

William Jones: May I raise two questions? Most African scholars were trained in mission schools. How do we identify those interpreters who might not approach the subject matter from a Christian point of view? I, myself, think with certain Christian presuppositions. But it is possible to discern other persons who, although they may have been trained in a Christian school, do not interpret the materials from a Christian standpoint. My second question is this: Are the theologians less tainted with presuppositions than the scholars, or the other way around? Did I hear you say that the scholars had the characteristic of a possible Christian bias, and then that theologians you were talking about are somehow not tainted with the same perspective?

Francis Botchway: I think you will have difficulty distinguishing the scholars from the theologians.

Kwame Gyekye: Perhaps there is a third category of researchers—you mentioned scholars or theologians, like Mbiti, who write from Christian presuppositions, and others who may be Christians but who do not fall into that category at all. Then there is also a category of scholars who are not Christians. I have met quite a few in Ghana, and who, therefore, approach traditional religion from a different perspective. Ideally, a person who is an interpreter and who perhaps is a practitioner, but especially a priest who is practicing, makes the best interpreter.

Jolanda Roessink (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): Dr. Roberts, you mentioned something earlier which keeps coming back to me, that the Asian input into Africa may, because of the similarities to their own religion, help us to understand African religions better because they share certain common elements which Christianity does not share with African religions. Could you elaborate on that, please?

Deotis Roberts: I happen to have developed some intense work on Asian religions from before the "Black revolution" struck Howard (University), so my acquaintance with Asian religions preceded my involvement in African religions. I found that my work in Asian religions, in terms of methodology and field experience, has been more useful to me in my understanding of African religions than, for instance, my study of German philosophy and theology. Nothing from the Western world opened doors of understanding for me to African religions so well as the study of Asian religions and the cultures behind them. If I hadn't gone to Asia first, before I turned to Africa, I would not have had a holistic orientation towards the world, religions, the family, and family life. For example, the ancestral system in China is quite similar to the way the ancestral system operates in Africa. I would not say that anyone who has not done that kind of work would necessarily have to do it, but it has been useful to me to have another perspective to bring to Africa other than the Western perspective.

Francis Botchway: If you convene that kind of conference of African scholars who are also African theologians, perhaps we might have people like Mbiti, Idowu, Asare Opoku; maybe Gaba, Sawyerr, Sodipo; maybe Rihio of Kenya; people in philosophy; people in sociology; people in anthropology, who have had the auto-ethnographic experience in the field; people who have been initiated in some of these cults and who would be bringing to the conference a personal experience of the religious experience of the people and not something which is purely a logical interpretation and analysis. If Mbiti sits at that round table with Rihio, with Kwame

Gyekye, or with Dr. Gaba, a lot of the things that Mbiti has written I am sure he will want to take back. This is a type of dialogue that really would bring a comprehensive understanding of the religious experience of African people.

Victor Wan-Tatah: I have somebody in mind who keeps reminding me that this is how we should proceed—that is Okot P'Bitek. He is hypercritical of people who have written on African religions who have allowed so many Western patterns of thought to creep in. I think his book, *African Religions in Western Scholarship,* is probably prerequisite for our efforts.

Francis Botchway: It is really very difficult to talk to an African priest. There are two different languages involved: there is a priestly language, which the majority of us do not understand; then there is the regular language, which they use when they talk to us. If I go to someone in a village of Dahomey to interview him about life, and he speaks the classical form, priestly form, to me, I would need someone to translate it into regular form to me. Then to translate that form into English for the sake of analysis, I would have lost a lot of the original meaning. There are people who have been initiated in order to get the information out of these African priests. We need to get some of these people who have been initiated. One who comes to mind is Idowu—or Gaba who was initiated into the Yoruba cult. You could never get anything out of the Yoruba cult; the priests will never say anything, not until you are initiated and become a trusted fellow of the cult. For Gaba to write his Ph.D. dissertation, he had to be initiated; and still, this took a very long time. Those kind of people can bring in the authentic religious experience of the people.

Warren Lewis: We have been at this for nearly two hours. I sense that we are making progress. Tomorrow, when you read your papers which you prepared before you came here, it is not expected that you change what you have to say to accommodate our concern for a Global Congress and for a congress in Africa. But now that we have heard one another on the proposal of a congress in Africa, we can listen to one another tomorrow in the context of our proposal. On Sunday, after Professor Lugira's speech, we will have another session like this one. We will brainstorm the concrete steps of how to proceed with planning the African Congress.

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION
May 27, 1978

Warren Lewis: Honored colleagues, I greet and welcome you on behalf of the faculty, administration, and students of Unification Theological Seminary. We are gathered today to take another significant step towards the convocation—we hope in 1981—of the first meeting of a Global Congress of the world's religions. We are reaching out to other groups and individuals interested in the cause of world-wide ecumenics, as we have reached out to you, seeking your help and dependent upon your wisdom. We know we do not know enough about Africa even to understand its plight and promise, much less to offer Africa advice or leadership in time of trouble. Therefore, we have asked you to come and teach us, as you confer with one another.

Similarly, we sense our limitations to convoke on our own strength and by ourselves the "U.N. of religions" which we envision. In the same way, then, we are calling for co-sponsors to step forward and join with us in full collegiality in the planning and structuring of a planetary forum where the most spiritual, inspired, critically insightful, and sensibly intellectual religious hearts and minds of our time can concentrate their moral power for the sake of humanity. The Global Congress we propose would have no military force to implement its decisions, could invoke no economic sanctions against its enemies, and would not exercise the power of excommunication against even its own dissident members. For, if a Global Congress is to be global, it needs to remain an open platform for the clarification of the deepest issues of human meaning from the pluralistic viewpoints of all the many religions. The rule of mutual toleration would mean in this case that anything goes and from anyone. No one could expect organizational union or ideological unity in such a circumstance; but the unification of hearts and humane intentions which might arise above this humble Babel would be the work that only a holy and pentecostal Spirit could accomplish.

This same rule of pluralism, I suggest, applies to our deliberations here today. We will deal with hot problems and concepts over which there is desperate disagreement. But we fear neither the variety nor the conflict of opinions; rather, we affirm our desire to create love while we struggle. We will take long, hard looks at the political, economic, cultural, racial and other implications of the issues which we discuss in religious language. Anyone is at liberty to say anything he feels the need to say, and can go ahead and say it knowing that we will all listen and accept the harshest statements of another's perspective on reality. However much I may disagree with that point of view, it is, nevertheless, accurate in that other person's eyes.

Thus far, our proposal for a Global Congress has met with overwhelming approval; and certainly no one has suggested that we are making our move to focus the global religious consciousness too soon! Your presence with us today is further evidence of the viability of the idea. We are also communicating with other groups with similar interests. We have heard from Pakistan and Iran in the Muslim world. Leading Hindu and Buddhist scholars have declared themselves solidly with us. And a variety of Jewish and Christian scholars and religious leaders have responded. The further we go, the more certain we become that we are on the the right road.

There is, then, something particularly special about the mini-congress in which you are about to participate. This is not just another conference of dispassionate academics, but is a daring stride forward taken by passionately religious individuals towards martialing the powers of thought and word, of the symbolic, the meaningful, and the religious depths and heights of human experience for the sake of Africa and the globe. We are proposing today—we of the Unification Seminary and you who are with us—to hold a regional congress of the religions in Africa as a major stage in our passage towards 1981 and the Global Congress.

Each of you major participants and panelists will be discoursing on the subjects you have chosen according to your best insights. But as we hear you and as you hear one another, we shall all be listening for wisdom and guidance in our project to facilitate the calling of the religions to congress in Africa. Therefore, I invite you, indeed, I implore you, to talk with one another and with us as we apply our knowledge towards discovering the means which will best implement the Congress of Religions in Africa and, ultimately, the Global Congress. Who ought the co-sponsors to be? What issues and actions are appropriate for our attention? Who are the leading hearts to be engaged in this movement? What are the best strategies for success and impact of our concerted actions?

We are here, today, to greet the Bright Continent, looking forward to a day in the near future when we shall once again convene ourselves on that other shore. We do not propose to "help" Africa; we have no "advice" to offer; rather, we come, respectful of Africa's autochthonous and indigenized religions, seeking guidance towards the peace and prosperity of the wide world. We ask not what we can do for Africa, but what Africa can do for us all!

Hail, Bright Continent—bright with your new future, your fresh energy, your untapped resources, and your young and vigorous daughters and sons; tell us how to have a world as healthy as a whole and happy tribal village.

Hail, Bright Continent—bright with the light of your own spiritual traditions, your enlightened ones, and the unique revelations you have received from On High; help lead the way to a *Global* communion of all spirits.

Hail, Bright Continent—unfortunately bright with the fires of warfare and the flare of probably necessary and certainly painful revolutions; we agonize with you in your re-birthpangs as you resurrect from the tombs of imperial and colonial domination, the grave inter-tribal hatreds from within, and the morbidity of racial bigotry imposed from without. May these evil spirits which have made you seem dark to the ignorant eyes of the outsider fall back before the dawn light that shines forth from Messiah's face.

Bright Continent, we pray for you:

> Hail! Hail! Hail! Let happiness come!
> Our stools and our brooms. . .
> If we dig a well, may it be at a spot where water is.
> If we take water to wash our shoulders, may we be refreshed.
> Nyongmo give us blessing!
> May the village be blest!
> May the priests be blest!
> May the mouthpieces of spirit-world be blest!
> May we be filled, going and coming.
> May we not drop our head-pads except at the big pot.
> May our fruitful women be like gourds, and may they bring forth and
> sit down.
> May misfortunes jump over us.
> If today anyone takes up a stick or a stone against this our blessing, do we
> bless him?
> May his *own* curse overtake him, flog him on Wednesday, and kill him
> on Sunday.
> Hail! Let happiness come!
> Is our voice one?
> Hail! Let happiness come!

(Gā Tribe of Ghana)

|Leader|

Say peace!
Peace to the children!
Peace to the gardens!
Peace to Africa!
Peace to our world!

|People|

Peace!
Peace to the children!
Peace to the gardens!
Peace to Africa!
Peace to our world!

(Kikuyu Tribe of Kenya)

It is now both my personal and professional pleasure to introduce a new friend of mine. Professor William Jones is director of African Studies at Florida State University where he is also professor of religion. I hold in my hand his most widely read literary document, *Is God a White Racist?* Now, if that doesn't raise the ante from the first bet, I don't know what would. Bill Jones is to the Black liberation community what Dick Rubenstein is to the Jewish community, the man who asks the hard questions. That is why we have asked him to chair the activities today. His own spiritual pilgrimage is indicative in and of itself. He started out a Baptist minister's son, but now he is a Unitarian-Universalist ordained minister. He bills himself as a humanist, and he is a man who talks about "functional ultimacy." Bill, the only advice I have for you today is to encourage you not to drop your head-pad before you get to the big pot!

William Jones (Conference Chairman): Before I introduce the speaker and panelists, I would just like to make a few observations about the conference. It is seldom that one finds a distinguished assembly of speakers and panelists like the one gathered here today. That is true for meetings in America as well as in Africa. I personally would like to applaud the sponsors for their insight in assembling this illustrious group. I would also applaud the sponsors for the understanding and sensitivity about African thought and culture reflected in their choice of the conference theme and the selection of panelists.

African culture and thought are a whole. Africans do not make the distinctions we make between religion and culture, religion and philosophy. Our panelists reflect that kind of comprehensive and totalistic approach to today's subject matter.

Assembled here are representatives of African religion and philosophy. In addition, we recognize that African thought has continued outside the motherland, wherever her sons and daughters have been taken. I have reference to Afro-American thought, for instance, "the Diaspora." We have a representative of that point of view as well.

Let me introduce our panelists: The Rev. Victor Wan-Tatah, graduate student now at Harvard Divinity School. Mr. Wan-Tatah is a Presbyterian minister who has served in the communications department of mass media. He is from Loso in Cameroon.

Mr. Shawn Byrne is an organizer for the National Council of Church and Social Action. I had the pleasure of meeting him last December at a conference in Washington. I wish to welcome him to our proceedings.

Dr. Francis Botchway, from Ghana, is a professor of international law and political science and head of the Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Cincinnati. He received his B.A. degree from Columbia University in public law and government. He has certificates in Russian, Eastern European and Chinese areas of study, as well as an M.A. and Ph.D. in international law and organization from the New School for Social Research.

Our speaker for the morning, Dr. Deotis Roberts, received his B.A. degree from Johnson C. Smith's, his B.D. from Shaw University. He received an M.S. degree in systematic theology from Hartford Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. from Edinburgh, Scotland. Currently he is Professor of Religion at Howard University. He is the editor of the *Journal of Religious Thought*, and a visiting professor at Claremont Theological Seminary. Last year he engaged in intriguing and profitable dialogue with a number of European theologians and politicians, particularly in Germany. He is the author of numerous books; *A Black Political Theology* and *Liberation and Reconciliation* are his most famous ones.

Before I give him the podium, I would simply like to identify the point of view and attitude which I bring to this conference, and I hope that you will share with me. Albert Camus put it quite well when he said, "The world needs real dialogue;" and he goes on to say, "Falsehood is just as much the opposite of dialogue as a silence." He concludes, "The only possible and authentic dialogue is the kind that takes place between people who remain what they are and speak their minds." It is this spirit, I trust, that we bring to this conference. Thank you.

Deotis Roberts: Thank you, Bill, for the introduction. I am very pleased to have the association and fellowship with Bill Jones, who has been a colleague of mine for many years, having been a student at Howard a number of years back and also a member of the faculty of philosophy; and therefore, it is wonderful to have him here and to be associated with him. One of the contributions that Bill has made for which we do not give him as much credit as I think he deserves, is the criticisms that he has brought to bear upon other Black scholars, especially questions of methodology. I know personally that his sharp criticisms have been helpful to me, to keep me alert, and I hope that he continues to be hard on us and keep us moving.

Some of the things that I am about to say today are controversial, and certainly, having listened to my friends from Africa, I know that many of the things I say will be subject to vigorous criticism; but I am an exploratory thinker and I am open to this kind of dialogue.

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY

Dr. James Deotis Roberts

Much has been written recently on the contextualization of theology in Africa by African theologians. A fruitful dialogue has been initiated between the Afro-American theologians and African theologians, and I have been a part of that dialogue for several years now. African theologians have been in dialogue with European theologians, and African theologians have participated in discussions with third-world theologians. What I have been asked to do is somewhat distinct from all of these previous efforts. It is, however, related to most of these discussions. My understanding is that I have been asked to look at the traditional African religions and lift out elements which might contribute to Christian theology in general, looking at it as one who has roots in Africa and of course being a Westerner also.

I am to do this as an Afro-American and as a theologian trained and functioning in the West. It should be clear from my title that I am dealing with traditional African religion. And I am going to use "religion" deliberately, not "religions," for I shall be concerned with the common characteristics of religious experience in so-called Black Africa, south of the Sahara.

My task is to explore elements in this body of religious experience which may prove useful in Christian theological discourse. We are dialoguing, as I understand it, with a living tradition. Those of us who have had some work in the history of religions know that there is very often a distinction made between religions that are still alive and those that no longer have a living presence. We are dealing here with a living tradition, and we should treat it in that way. But it is a tradition that has a long history that antedates, of course, the colonial period in Africa. The historical study of African religion is necessary if we are to understand contemporary developments. Our dialogue is to take place with a living tradition, a dynamic tradition, in which there are new areas of application as well as continuities with the past. African traditional religion was never wholly particularistic. Religious concepts, symbols and practices had a currency wider than other elements of our ethnically based culture. Religious movements, cults and objects were subject to historical diffusion. On the other hand, African traditional religion had an ethnic base in the sense that it was articulated through the socio-political institutions of the tribe. However much religious concepts and symbols transcended the horizons of traditional culture, the African could only experience his religion and give expression to it through the structures of the tribe.

Multiple adaptations in relative isolation to different environments and effects on small populations produced the fragmented, autonomous groupings that we call the tribes. It was in the tribes that African traditional religion received its visible expression. Authority was basically politico-religious, and professional priesthoods and other cultic officers or forms of religious dedication represented partial approaches to the specializations that went on within the religious systems as a whole. At the territorial level it was the hierarchy of family heads, clan leaders, elders and chiefs who presided over religious rituals, led the people in worship and took the lead or initiative in creating and manipulating the religious institutions, such as oracles or rites of initiation. Tribal loyalty is still important, but it has undergone a rapid and radical transformation. From being a more or less autonomous political unit, it has now developed into an ideology of unity or a symbol of cultural identity. African traditional religion, therefore, co-exists with the missionary religions—Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

In addition, new, visible forms of African traditional religion are coming into existence. Communities of affliction would be one example. These are voluntary associations, more or less religious in character, which cater to sick people and people in need of status definition. These usually include a form of spirit mediumship and attach much importance to the freedom of experience, such as speaking in tongues. These movements have affinity with Pentecostalism and faith healing. African religious traditions also find a new lease on life in the so-called independent churches. These are listed as belonging to three main categories—those that are designated as Christian, Hebraist, or neo-Traditional. In the Christian type, the differences with the parent mission churches are historical rather than theological. In the Hebraist type is found a form of neo-Judaism, with varied emphasis on aspects of the Old Testament tradition. In those designated as neo-Traditional, there is a conscious revival and development of African traditional religion. It is in the neo-Traditional type of churches that the most distinctive African religious roots are to be found. And finally, there is the presence of traditional African religious experience in historic churches and in Islam.[1]

The burden of my discussion will be on ways of thinking among African people. Some years ago I read a book by a Japanese professor, Prof. Nakamura of Tokyo University, on ways of thinking of Eastern peoples, where he dealt with the way Indians, Tibetans, Chinese and Japanese people think. This gave me an insight into the possibility that there are ways of thinking that are non-Western, as well as ways of believing that are non-Western. I want to deal here with the ways of thinking that are African. This has some affinity with what we are doing with Black religion and Black theology, so it is not alien to our interests in this country.

African Protestant writers have been quicker to interest themselves in the religious beliefs of the traditional African experiences than some Catholic writers. The reason seems to be that Roman Catholics need a philosophical foundation for theology. Protestants, on the other hand, can develop a theology based "on the biblical faith of Africans which speaks to the African soul."[2] This implies using African categories of thought arising out of the experience of African people. This does not imply that African Protestant theologians are not cautious regarding what they are able to use from traditional African religions. Mbiti acknowledges that he is not fully certain how much he can use from African traditional religions. He asks, for example, "How far can we or should we regard African religiosity as a preparation for the gospel?"[3] He concludes that he is sure that this background cannot be ignored. Idowu asserts that we should apprehend African spiritual values with the African mind, while possessing the prerequisite knowledge of the fundamental facts of the faith which are to be expressed and disseminated in these indigenous idioms.[4]

With their neo-scholastic training, Roman Catholic scholars assume that there could be no African theology without a prior discovery of an African philosophy, and this search has been a disappointment, mainly because of a limited view of philosophy held by these same Roman Catholics. If they had a broad view of philosophy, they could include African ways of thinking under the canopy of philosophical reflection; but because they have a limited understanding of the meaning of philosophy, which they have gained from their neo-scholastic backgrounds, they are unable to appreciate African ways of thinking, and therefore they have not been able to unearth an acceptable understanding of African philosophy as a prerequisite for African theology.

Protestants, on the other hand, have been less restricted in their attitude toward philosophy and have refused to be restricted by Western definitions of it. Mbiti asserts that behind the religious diversity in traditional Africa there is a single philosophy. He admits that the interpretation of African life through word and action may involve subjective judgement. African neo-scholastics would not be satisfied with the subjective approach to philosophy. Such a thinker would want to build a rational, conceptual system out of African traditional thought, comparable to the classical Western tradition in philosophy.

Kagame, an African neo-scholastic, illustrates this point of view. He admits that the question of an African philosophy has arisen because of the encounter with European philosophy. It is through the inspiration from European philosophy that the African thinks of trying to express the traditional thought of his people as a conceptual system. He accepts Aristotle, for example, as his guide because he believes that Aristotle has universal breadth and relevance.

At one point, Africans were flattered that Europeans had taken their original ideas seriously enough to build a rational conceptual system out of them. They saw this as a corrective to the attitudes of Levy-Bruhl[5] and Emil Ludwig, who asserted the incapacity of Africans to think conceptually. Edwin Smith reports that in a conversation with Ludwig, he explained that missionaries were teaching Africans about God. Ludwig was perplexed and responded in the following words, "How can the untutored Africans conceive God? Deity is a philosophical concept which savages are incapable of framing."[6]

Now this kind of mentality has operated in the West; Ludwig is not alone. He expressed it openly, but others have this in their minds. It is understood, then, why Tempels' work on Bantu philosophy generated considerable excitement. With Aristotle and Aquinas as guides, Tempels and his pupil, Kagame, explored the ideas of some of the Bantu language. They discovered African parallels to concepts such as being, existence, and causality. They developed an ontological and epistemological structure on the Bantu understanding of vital force. In this way they revealed fresh and typically African emphases and categories. But these philosophical constructs were based almost exclusively on the study of language: linguistic analysis, language structure, and on the range of meanings of particular words. The main literary source was the corpus of proverbs assumed to contain the wisdom of Africa and sometimes the names and attributes of the Supreme Being.[7]

In fact, proverbs are often cynical statements about life that may rest upon observation and experience only, while the etymology of names, minus other kinds of evidence, can incur all kinds of fantasies and misinterpretations. A part of the problem is a disdain by many philosophers of what I would call symbolic thought. Symbolic ways of thinking were not considered as meeting acceptable standards as far as the cogency of reason is concerned. It was felt that symbols could not be studied systematically as symbols. It was held that they had to be transformed into reasoned concepts, and that every people had to evolve in their thinking from a symbolic stage to a philosophical or scientific stage of thought.

The work of Levi-Strauss, and the methods he used in the materials he extracted from African experience, seemed to give a new direction to Western appreciation for symbolic thinking. Furthermore, it was asserted that one could remain within the scope of rational thought without doing away with concrete symbols, and at the same time articulate and render them more intelligible.

The interpretation of symbols is not limited to verbal symbols. Symbolic action is perhaps more important. Victor Turner's studies have complemented the work of Levi-Strauss at this point. African ritual, according to Turner, is a configuration of manufactured symbols with varied structures and different levels of meaning. Turner's concepts of the positional meaning of symbols, which are linked to other, related contexts in the whole range of culture, is a way of relating parts to the whole.[8] So this perspective, that we can use symbolic thinking and, from our appreciation for that, move to a deeper understanding of the meaning of symbols in African thought and experience, I think, is very constructive.

Mbiti asserts that a linear concept of time moving from creation to consummation is foreign to African thinking. There is a past and a present but a virtual absence, he would say, of a concept of the future. The future is therefore either potential time or no time. Africans must experience time for it to make sense to them. Time moves backward rather than forward in African experience, according to Mbiti.

Now these are two dimensions—past and present, or the dominant periods in the life of an individual and the community. Two Swahili words are used, "zamani" and "sasa," to designate time—zamani (past) and sasa (present). The two time-periods are said to overlap and there is no necessary separation between them. Zamani is not just "time," it is the period in which people exist and in which they project themselves primarily into the past and, to a lesser extent, into the future. Sasa is a micro-time, but its future is almost actualized and nearly passed away by the time one recognizes it. So vague is the future as anticipation that East African languages, according to Mbiti, do not provide a word for the future in their vocabularies.

The zamani period is called macro-time, or big time. It is past, present and whatever future there is. It overlaps with sasa. Before events are absorbed into zamani, big time, they must first occur in little time, sasa. And then they move backward into zamani, in which everything finds its termination. According to Mbiti then, zamani is the storehouse of all phenomena and events—a vast ocean of time where everything gets absorbed into reality. Thus, sasa and zamani have quantity and quality; for example, the good, long, short, bad, in relation to a particular phenomenon.

Chronology, then, is reckoned in traditional societies in Africa by phenomenon calendars, or event calendars, rather than numerical calendars. Time is not measured for its own sake but according to the importance of the happenings that take place in one's experience. Lunar months have names in relation to harvest events and other events, like hunting. A year is complete, then, when the seasons and activities of a complete year have been realized. Africans expect the years to come and go in an endless rhythm, like that of day and night and the waxing and waning of the moon.[9]

Now we see that John Mbiti helps us to appreciate the place of myth in African traditional thought. History flows backward, as it were. There is no golden age in the sense of progressing forward into a golden period. No belief in progress, no end time. The center of gravity in African thought is zamani. Therefore, African thought is preoccupied with the myths of creation. There are many myths explaining creation, the first man, the fall of man, and the origins of history, the genesis of things; but there are no myths, according to Mbiti, for the end time, the eschaton. Humans look backward from whence they came and are certain that nothing shall bring this world to a conclusion. Mbiti writes, "Human life flows, follows a rhythm of nature which nothing can destroy—birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, procreation, death, entering into the company of the departed and eventually into the company of the spirits. Another rhythm is also at work, that of days and nights, months, seasons and years. This two-fold rhythm of nature goes on forever."[10]

It will be necessary to return to John Mbiti again, but for the present, I wish to explore briefly the role of myth in African traditional thinking. We are not concerned with the content of African mythology at the present time, but with myth as a way of thinking. Charles Long, a Black scholar in the field of history of religions, provides some helpful reflections upon the value of mythical thinking. He rightly points out that we affirm in our world, the West, a rationalistic form of thinking, and usually consign myth to the fanciful, the fantasy of imagination, the unreal.[11] We therefore consider peoples and cultures given to mythical thinking as unreal. Some theologians, Long recalls, abhor the use of myths because they think it refers to the fanciful and the unreal. He asserts that the study of people who live in myth-making cultures would be a corrective to this misinformed attitude of Western scholars. Myth, according to Long, is a true story, a story about reality. It is impossible to understand reality and peoples from a myth-making culture unless one understands their reality in relation to myth. I quote from Long: "When we speak of understanding their reality, we are speaking of their reality in the precise sense of their human presence, their specificity and qualitative meaning in time and space. We are not denying the possibility of understanding them on other levels (for example, as a biological being), but such an understanding tells us little, if anything, about their humaneness."[12] Myths are not true, he goes on to say, in the literal sense, according to the way we understand literalness in the West; but literalness, he says, is not to be equated with truth. Mythic thinking is not to be identified with logic. On the other hand, it is not illogical or prelogical. Myth is at the same time logical and illogical, logical and magical, rational and irrational. It represents man's initial confrontation with the powers in the world. Now, the beings referred to in myths are forms of power grasped existentially or in terms of experience; and in myths, expression is being given to man's reaction to life as a source of power and being. The word and content of myth, he understands to be revelations of power.[13]

The veneration of the earth, totemic animals, and ancestors in myth-making cultures makes it clear that the apprehension of life as power is the main concern of the mythic consciousness. But it is to be remembered, according to Long, that the coming of the rational in our experience does not mean the end of the mythic. The mythic and the rational co-exist. The mythic apprehension of reality is not a victim of evolution. Alongside the rational, it remains a mode of thought through which we have access to what is real and what is true. There are human experiences on the personal and the cultural level which can *only* be expressed in symbolic form. These meanings are in many cases the most profound meanings in our lives because they symbolize the specificity of our human situation. Myth is a symbolic ordering which makes clear how the world is present for man.[14] In religious thought, the use of analogy may be an attempt to deal discursively with symbolic forms of human expression. And then in-depth psychology has made it clear that the most profound relationships of human existence cannot be rendered adequately on the level of consciousness and rational thought.

I quote from Long: "The most profound symbols of human reality seem to include as the necessary ingredient a dimension of reality which is more than human and more than natural."[15] He tells us that the cosmogonic myths, the myths of creation, convey profound meanings. The creation myth is an expression of man's cosmic orientations. This involves one's apprehension of time and space, one's participation in the natural order, the relationship between humans as well as the ultimate powers which sustain human existence in the world.[16]

In this section we have looked briefly at method in African ways of thought. We have concluded that there are similarities and yet differences between African ways of thinking and Western ways of thinking. It is obvious to me that Africans have much in common with Asians as distinguished from Western modes of thought. Thus far, few African scholars have done the serious work that needs to be done in either the history of religion or comparative religion. This makes the work of Black scholars like Charles Long very important. We need to know that literalness and logic do not necessarily equal truth, that mythic or symbolic ways of thinking are up-to-date, and that they touch life at a profound level of meaning. This would unlock for us the context of much of African traditional religious experience and thought.

Next I want to look at some of the contents of African religious experience and, therefore, project some of these possible contributions that may come from that. Before I read the works by African religious scholars, I had concluded that the subject of African traditional religion was unmanageable, that I could not really get anything from it because it was like a forest. It appears that the diversity of tribal customs, religious systems, languages and many other factors were too vast for any Westerner, Black or White, to tackle. This appeared to be the case notwithstanding the fact that my study of non-Western religion had been extensive. Through reading men like Mbiti and others, the subject matter became more within the range of my vision, and I discovered that African religion at the core is similar across the continent, at least south of the Sahara Desert. The beliefs in a supreme God, lesser spirits and reverence for ancestors are held in common. These are the essence or vital core of beliefs of African traditional religion. Furthermore, I discovered that the African theologians interpreted these basic beliefs in such a manner as to relate to biblical faith. Studying African religion at the same time that I was discovering the Black religious heritage was a kind of reinforcing experience, for in some ways we are dealing with a continuous tradition in the African/Afro-American connection. Of course, there is much discontinuity as well as continuity when we enter into this subject matter.[17] According to an African scholar from Nigeria, Osadolor Imasogie, monotheism is the only adequate description for African traditional religion. There are lesser spirits or divinities, but these are regarded as having been created at a point determined by the supreme reality. However, the place given these divinities is so conspicuous that monotheism must be qualified in such a way that this prominence is maintained while the underlying monotheistic motif is not obscured. Imasogie elects to use "bureaucratic monotheism" to describe African traditional religion. He sees this as appropriate because of the relationships between divinities and the socio-political patterns of African society. African society is highly organized. It is hierarchical in nature. Kings are at the top. Kings appoint ministers to see to the day-to-day activities of their subjects. Various languages in Africa have specific names for the Supreme Being as opposed to the names for the lesser spirits.

The divinities are mainly derived from the personification of various aspects of nature which symbolize God's continuing providential concern over creation.[18] The God in traditional African religion is a creator and is also a God of providence. God to Africans was never a theistic god in the Western sense. The names and attributes of God reflect an understanding of God as good, merciful, just and caring. God is a father or mother, and Africans often say, "God has been merciful, He has been good to me." God can overrule the power of the ancestors and the spirits. There is often a childlike expression of faith toward the Supreme Being.

For most traditional believers, God is not a God who is so removed from experience that He is completely without function within experience. Though He is often felt to be unapproachable or transcendent, He is believed to be at work at the same time in and behind all that happens and exists. European Christians who find it extremely difficult to relate Sunday's worship to Monday's work could learn from African believers how to capture a consistent religious experience of life; this would be a real spiritual enrichment for them.[19]

Mbiti, in a study on the names of God, unearthed several important attributes of God held by traditional believers. Two of these are God's active and creative involvements in the world. The names of God speak about the work or activities of God. Africans conceive of God as an active Being, as personal, as one who manifests Himself through what He does. He observes that Africans are not given to much meditation in religious matters, but instead they celebrate their religious life. God is therefore sought in action rather than in pure contemplation. He is related to the created universe. His presence and power are manifest in and through natural objects and phenomena. God is intimately associated with the universe, as its creator and sustainer, but the universe itself is a manifestation of God.[20] So the writer is struck by the similarities between the traditional names for God and those that are used for God in scripture.[21]

Shorter pulls together the content of Africa's tradition in religion and its contribution. He speaks of the following: 1) a sense of religious wholeness; 2) symbolism as a means of communication; 3) fecundity, physical generation, life and the sharing of life; 4) man in community; 5) the relation between human and spiritual beings.[22] Africans affirm wholeness of thought as well as wholeness of life. Religious experience permeates the whole person and all relationships for this life and even beyond death. Basil Matthews from

Trinidad, who was a colleague at Howard University for some time and is now back in Trinidad, lifts up in his writings this sense of whole thinking as crucial for peoples of African descent. He points to Senghor, the poet and philosopher of "Negritude," as a fitting example,[23] for his description of "mythology as the symbolic articulation of objective truth, the incarnation of ideas."[24] Senghor observes that it is through symbolic structures and operations of music and dance, literature, rhythm and color that Africans assimilate themselves with the "Other," and this is the best pathway to knowledge.[25] The use of this concept of Negritude by French-speaking Africans is a good meeting point between Africans and all other peoples of African descent. The quest for African personality began in Paris with an encounter between these French-speaking Africans from the continent of Africa, the West Indies and many literary persons of Afro-American descent.

Mbiti is very negative, unfortunately, toward this search for Blackness in pan-African culture as a kind of useless passion.[26] But in my judgement, there is a richness here that theologians need to mine, both Black and African theologians. In doing so, we may reach the taproots of our common religious experience and our common cultural roots.[27] The thinking of Africans, according to Matthews, is holistic. At the same time, it is true that religious experience is also holistic.

Neither the dichotomy of thought ("either/or" ways of thinking) nor the dualism of sacred and secular are a part of this African worldview. There is an obvious affinity, then, with biblical faith which informs the whole person and all of life. African ways of thinking and believing may help us cut through the Greek dualism and the Germanic or Teutonic dialectical thought, and recover the gospel in its ancient setting. This has significance and important implications for ethics as well as faith. It is of some importance, then, to ponder that in African traditional religion the gods of creation and of redemption are the same. We have already mentioned two things—namely, symbolism on one hand and fecundity on the other. I would like to mention two other aspects of African religion as well: communalism, the sense of oneness in community in African experience; and the idea of the relationship between the visible and the invisible.

The Swahili word "ujamaa," or "familyhood," is descriptive of African communalism. The extended family is at the heart of African community life. Julius Nyerere asserts that in traditional African society, individuals exist within a community. There is a vital communion of the life bond which creates solidarity between members of the same family or clan. The fact of having been born in a particular family, clan or tribe plunges one into a particular vital current. This modifies one's whole being and turns it in the direction of this community's way of life. The family, the clan, or the tribe is a whole of which the member is only a part.[28] "The same blood, the same life, which is shared by all, which all receive from the first ancestor runs through the veins of all."[29] "Because I am, we are," has been used as a way of describing the vital participation in traditional African communalism.

It has valuable insights to share in ethics as well as theology. Nyerere writes, "Both the rich and the poor individuals are completely secure in African society. Natural catastrophe brought famine, but it brought famine to everybody, poor or rich. Nobody starved either for food or for human dignity because he lacked personal wealth. He could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member."[30] While viewing society, then, as an extension of the basic family unit, Nyerere goes on to suggest that this concept needs now to be extended beyond the tribe, beyond the nation, to the continent and to the whole human race.[31]

Theologically we can see the immediate use of the concept and practice of "ujamaa" in developing a doctrine of church. The church as a family is present in the thought and life of the early Christian movement. Paul's letters are rich with reference to the church as the family of God and of the household of faith. I have written elsewhere in this vein and have found the family image a meaningful way to speak of the peoplehood of Blacks in the body of Christ.[32] I have not been unaware of the African heritage as a background in doing this. Much serious work remains to be done on both continents. There has been some work done in Africa, comparing the corporate personality in Israel with that sense of communalism we have described in African religious thought and life.[33] African communalism has special relevance when we bring the visible and invisible, empirical and super-empirical dimensions of life together. Vital participation in a living community is involved in sacred life, and all life is sacred. One participates in the life of the ancestors; in the life of one's forebears, one prepares for one's own life to be carried on in one's own descendants.

Mulago writes, "There is a continuation of family and individual life after death. The dead constitute the invisible part of the family, clan or tribe, and this invisible part is the most important.

At all ceremonies of any importance—birth, marriage, death, burial, investiture—it is the ancestors who preside, and their will is subordinate only to that of the Supreme Being."[34] Mbiti is not uncritical of African traditional religion. He is distressed, for example, that African traditional religion has myths of creation and fall, but no myths of redemption and the eschaton. But he celebrates the easy manner in which Africans enter into the spiritual world and the fellowship which exists between the living and the dead. He suggests that there might be a renewal in theology and church if we could make creative use of these materials. The sacraments of baptism and eucharist present themselves as areas where the temporal and eternal meet. Africans in their traditional religious beliefs and practices penetrate into the spiritual world through offerings, libations and sacrifices, thus using the material as the bridge with the spiritual and the eternal. Another area where there could be a breakthrough is the doctrine of the communion of saints. Here African traditional thought and practices could easily bring a renewal into the church, the life of the church, with regard to the relationship between the departed and the living. Fasholé-Luke of Sierra Leone makes it clear that there are some aspects of African ancestral beliefs which are incompatible with the Christian faith. We cannot baptize everything into the Christian faith, he would say. For example, the belief that no death can take place except by the will of the ancestors and, he would say, against that, the Lord of the church is the Lord of the living and the dead.

It is Luke's contention that veneration of ancestors in Africa and the desire to be linked with the dead can be satisfied by a sound doctrine of the communion of saints. In this statement, the living and the departed would be viewed as linked together in an indissoluble bond through participation in the sacraments so that earth and heaven meet together, and already in this life we taste the fruits of eternal life.[35]

I conclude by dealing briefly with what I call the misplaced debate between two Black scholars. In view of all that we have said, the urgency and importance of the task of exploring African traditional religion should be obvious. There is an abundance of material for all the disciplines of religious studies. The neglect of Africa in religious studies must come to an end. Much of the responsibility for providing adequate treatment of African religion in the West rests with Black scholars who have their roots in Africa, who will take a stand on this. For example, I have had some proposals for some books on world religions passed to me by publishers in this country who left out African religions; I turned down those proposals, and said, "I will not approve this unless the African religions are given equal space and time with all other religions of the world."

These opportunities do come and we must take advantage of them. We have a double form of experience, as DuBois said in *Souls of Black Folk,* "We live in America and we are Westerners in this sense, but we have roots in Africa." We must perform, therefore, a task similar to what Andrew Young is trying to perform in diplomacy in the United Nations. We have not got off to a good start thus far in religious studies. In dialogues with Black and African scholars, it would appear that, for example, Charles Long, a historian of religion, and James Cone, a theologian, have mainly aired their own differences in the company of African religious scholars. They could do that at home rather than in Africa. Theology and history of religions were contrasted, for example, in Ghana in a meeting they had there. Long, who sits loose to revelation, presses the study of religious experience as phenomena. Cone, on the other hand, insists upon the normative character of Jesus Christ as a revelation from God. Now if Cone could view the study of religious experience as valid for his experience, Long could open up many doors, it seems to me, in traditional African religion for Cone to explore and walk through. And if, on the other hand, Long could understand the importance of revelation to believers, this could be useful in his work on African religions. This would be even more useful if Cone could expand his understanding of revelation to include God's self-disclosure in all of creation and all of history as well as in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Lord. The dogmatic stand between these two Black scholars indicates that they are not likely to facilitate this important dialogue unless they are able to open up their hermeneutical structures.[36]

While African religious scholars are aware of a distinction between a theology developed with a traditional religious system behind them, and Christian theology in the church, most of these scholars desire to involve the traditional religious experience in their discussions. It is clear from this paper that I believe that this is the right direction to go. It is also clear that I believe that Black religious scholars have a stake in what happens. If we are only able to disagree among ourselves, then we should step aside and let it happen without us. But since we do live in two worlds, we have the need and responsibility to help make it happen. This in essence is what I have attempted to say. My desire is to see Blacks represented in the various disciplines of religious thought, working as a team with African religious scholars to excavate and interpret this rich religious heritage for the benefit of the whole human race.

Notes

[1] Aylward Shorter, *African Christian Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1977), pp. 11-14.

[2] A Statement by the All-Africa Conference of Churches, "Engagement" (Nairobi, 1969.)

[3] John Mbiti, *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 189-90.

[4] E.B. Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A Definition* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1973), p. xi.

[5] Shorter, *ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

[6] Kwesi Dickson and Paul Ellingworth, *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1969), p. 10; quoted by E.B. Idowu.

[7] Shorter, *ibid.*, p. 25.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[9] "Eschatology" in Dickson, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-62.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 163. My estimate of Mbiti's contribution is not uncritical. Most African religious scholars are severe critics of Mbiti's proposal. Few, if any, have been able to provide a constructive alternative. I encourage and welcome their contribution to this subject.

[11] Charles H. Long, *Alpha, the Myths of Creation* (New York: George Braziller, 1963), p. 11.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

[17] See, C. H. Long, "Structural Similarities and Dissimilarities in Black and African Theologies," *Journal of Religious Thought* (Vol. XXII, No. 2, 1975), pp. 9-24.

[18] "African Traditional Religion and Christian Faith," in *Review and Expositor* (Vol. LXX, No. 3, Summer, 1973), pp. 189-90.

[19] "God in Traditional African Religion," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (December 1975, No. 5), pp. 27-28.

[20] John Mbiti, "African Names of God," *Orita* (VI/I, June, 1972), p. 5.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 14. Cf. E. B. Idowu, "God," in Dickson and Ellingworth, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-28.

[22] Shorter, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-36.

[23] See Matthews, "Whole-Making: Tagore and Thurman," *The Journal of Religious Thought* (Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, Fall-Winter, 1977-78), pp. 38-39.

[24] From "Modern Pedagogy," an address to the Senegal National Scholarships Convention, July 7, 1971.

[25] Senghor, "Spirit of Civilization or the Laws of African Negro Culture," First Conference of Negro Writers and Artists, Paris, 1956.

[26] John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 351-53.

[27] See Edward A. Jones, *Voices of Negritude* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1971), pp. 13-17.

[28] J. K. Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 7.

[29] "Vital Participation," in *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs*, p. 139.

[30] Nyerere, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[32] See my, "A Black Ecclesiology of Involvement," in *The Journal of Religious Thought* (Vol. XXXII, No. 1, 1975), pp. 36-47.

[33] Bonganjalo Goba, "Corporate Personality: Ancient Israel and Africa," in *The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa*, ed. Basil Moore (Atlanta: John Knox, 1974), pp. 65-75.

[34] *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs*, p. 139.

[35] Edward W. Fasholé-Luke, "Ancestor Veneration and the Communion of Saints," in *New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World* (London: SPCK, 1974), p. 220.

[36] Cf. James H. Cone, "Report—Black and African Theologies: A Consultation," *Christianity and Crisis* (March 3, 1975), pp. 50-52. Cone's essay, "Black Theology and the Black Church," *Cross Currents* (Vol. XXVII, No. 2, Summer 1977), pp. 147-56. C. H. Long, "Perspectives For a Study of Afro-American Religion in the United States," *History of Religions* (Vol. II, No. 1, August 1971), pp. 54-66. Charles H. Long, "Structural Similarities and Dissimilarities in Black and African Theologies," *Journal of Religious Thought* (Vol. XXII, No. 2, Fall-Winter, 1975), pp. 9-24.

Discussion

Victor Wan-Tatah: When we talk about African religion and its contribution to Christianity, we are talking about a religion that has come from the West, whose influence has altered and changed the ways of thinking and living of the people in Africa. It is a contemporary religion dealing with a contemporary culture and religion which informs the former culture. Christianity, in a paradoxical way, has been the carrier of a mixed gospel to Africa. Some people say that Christianity, which carried technology and Western culture to Africa, is neutral. It is not neutral. Christianity has taken concepts to Africa, philosophical concepts, technological concepts of the West, which have influenced the philosophical way of thinking of the people. Approaching African thought with our own philosophical preconceptions does not facilitate understanding of the holistic way of African thinking, which is a major contribution of African religions to Christianity. African religion is a religion which is lived. It is not a conceptual system which people have revised because they want to respond to the vagaries of nature and the vicissitudes of life. There is no single, completely acceptable way of looking at African religion, its worth, its values and its contribution to Christianity; but we should not miss the fact that African religion is one which is primarily lived. We should be cautious when we enter into African religion through the philosophical door.

Dr. Roberts mentioned Senghor's "Negritude" concept, the intuitive method of understanding, grasping reality through symbolism. There is also the contribution of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the president of Ghana, on "conscientism" based on traditional African humanism and communalism. It is difficult to articulate a purely African religion without looking at the impact of colonialism and its technology on Africa. The mentality of the people has, in effect, been colonized. The "conscientism" of Dr. Nkrumah addresses this within the context of wholeness.

There is also the "communal crisis" of Sekou Toure, who addresses the wholeness attitude, the wholeness concept, in terms of communism and capitalism. Toure's "African communalism" links capitalism and communism and leaves room for the human being. The human being is the center of all activities. Man is not a means to an end; he is a means *and* an end. Tom Boyar stresses African socialism and the dignity of man. The individual exists for others in the community, and the community cares for the individual. When the two coexist with corresponding responsibilities, the community becomes wholesome.

Lastly, Dr. Obote, the former president of Uganda, talks of the "common man's character," which is identifiable in African religion and the African way of life. The common man's character is a leftist approach to the concept of wholesomeness, whereby political power is put into the hands of the majority of the people. This is reflected in the institution of kingship and the installation of kings in African society. The king-makers represent the people, and the commoners usually have a say in the choice of the person who is to rule the rest of the community or tribe. Most decisive in the decision-making process for the commoners and the king-makers is whether a candidate would be able to represent the people well and be their agent in all circumstances. The reverence given to the king is the kind of reverence one would give to one's fellow man in that structure, but the method of approaching the king is the method by which one would approach God. This social structure reflects the nature and structure of religion, of theology, in Africa. Where divinity is served, the people act as agents of God.

Shawn Byrne: I want to make some general observations about the value of the encounter of Western-style Christianity and African religions. As I see it, the advantage of Western-style Christianity encountering what, to it, is an alien religious system, is that it makes Christianity aware of its own preconceptions, things that it has supposed to be eternal and permanent truths. The encounter between two such religious systems can help to raise basic questions which have not been raised because so many things have been taken for granted. After a religious system has existed for a couple of thousand years, it takes many things for granted. So it is healthy for it to be challenged by a different way of life, of thinking and of experience.

In support of what Mr. Wan-Tatah said, when we (Western Christians) approach African religions with our categories and systems of thought and philosophy, we are already imposing on them. We are requiring the African experience to conform to ours. We are requesting that it be measured by the standard which we have decided to apply to it. We need to be careful about this, and sensitive; ours is not the only way of experiencing the universe or experiencing ourselves or experiencing God.

The encounter between Christianity and African traditional religion, or any other great religion, requires that we be willing to learn. My only and very brief experience directly of Africa and African religions was during a trip to Kenya a few years back. I toured Irish Catholic missions. Where else? (Laughter) I strayed into some Italian Catholic missions, too, though we tried to avoid them! (Laughter) I saw a lot of very good services being provided by the Europeans: churches, schools, hospitals; but what I also felt was that this kind of Christianity was being imported as a prefabricated, European invention and structure. It was being imported into a very different culture and, with slight modifications, was being suggested to the people as the thing they should accept.

I felt that there was fundamental error there. Christianity was not entering in the spirit in which alone it has the right to enter, that is, in the spirit of the servant. Christianity thought of itself as coming as a servant to provide services for the people and to provide salvation to the people; but it lacked the understanding that the Africans have lived as long as the Christians have lived. Africans have experienced God in their way, have experienced creation in their way, and have experienced themselves in their way. They have every bit as much right to their experience as we Western Christians have to ours; therefore, theirs is as valid as ours. I felt there was a failure to recognize the validity of the African experience.

I think hospitality is one characteristic of the African way of life. This might seem to be a homely quality; but, to me, it is a very important one because it expresses one's attitude toward his fellow man. Hospitality is expressed to the stranger, the one who is not us. Therefore, I think it expresses something very deep in our evaluation of people. My experience of the Western world is (and the more West I go, the more this experience deepens) that we do not have a sense of reverence for person as person. Our attitude tends to be a bit exploitative. But I was very moved one day while visiting some of the outstations of the missionary with whom I was staying in Kenya. In the jungle, in a little clearing just large enough to eke out a living, the woman of the house there welcomed us. Before I left, she wanted to catch one of her chickens and give it to me. Now, by her standards, my way of life must have been the life of a king. I must have seemed very wealthy to her. That expressed something deep and valuable that was not particular to her, but is, I think, general there: hospitality.

Another point I admired is the African respect for forbears; it is an awareness of our indebtedness to our forebears, a sense of gratitude, an attitude that is non-exploitative. What good are the ancestors, really? We respect them for what they have been, what they have endured, for what they have bequeathed, whether they are still living or whether they are passed on.

I perceived a sense of the spirituality of creation; all that is, has the element of spirit about it. I guess most religions have somehow enshrined that idea; but I think the more denominational we become, the less we appreciate it. All of creation is religious in the sense of being related to God and in the deeper sense of having that quality of spirit, of ultimates, of what is eternal. Out of Africa comes that sense of the oneness of all things, of the universe, of man with all creation, and of man and creation with the divine, with God. We Westerners could learn a great deal from this.

What we may learn from the encounter between African religions and the Christian religion is not chiefly nor merely a system of creeds, but, more fundamentally, an attitude by which we express relationships, relationships of all beings to one another, whether animate or inanimate, divine or human.

Francis Botchway: I would like to comment on just one aspect of the presentation made by Dr. Roberts. But first, I want to distinguish between Euro-Christianity and Christianity itself. What we experience in Africa is not simply Christianity; it is a Europeanized Christianity. It is not the simple life of the Nazarene, but the simple life of the Nazarene in an institutionalized paraphernalia with dogmas superimposed on the teachings of Christ. We need to make this distinction between Euro-Christianity and Christianity. If we fail to do that, then this encounter, this Socratic dialogue which we are proposing, would be an exercise in futility; because, in essence, we would be dealing with European culture and European value systems which are superimposed on Christianity, rather than dealing with Christianity itself as a system of thought or as a religion.

Dr. Roberts quoted Mbiti in his presentation, but it seems to me that the emphasis on Mbiti was a bit unfortunate. What I want to address myself to is Mbiti's concept of time. If we accept Professor Mbiti's conceptualized postulate, it seems he is saying that the African as African is incapable of perceiving the future, or that the future which he is capable of perceiving is only that which is immediately perceivable; therefore, the African is incapable of affirming history. He cannot look into the future. If we accept that as the key to understanding African philosophy and African religions, then the African is thought to be incapable of developing a philosophic system of thought; therefore, he could not develop a theology. That is very hard for me to accept as a social theorist and a humanist. If we accept the theory that the African is holistic, if the African is homo-religiosus, if the African is homo-economicus and homo-politicus, then the African is also a philosophical being. We cannot deny that. To suggest that the African is capable of conceptualizing time only in the past is to say that the African is at the primitive level of evolution.

I argue that Mbiti is totally wrong, that his emphasis on the concept of time as the key element in understanding the religiosity of the African is a total distortion of the philosophical and religious tradition of African peoples. In essence, it relegates the African to an inferior level; and I think we ought to be able to move beyond that.

What really troubles me when people talk about the African conception of God is that they are not looking at a systematic study of various ethnic groups in Africa and their conceptions of God. For Mbiti to have studied a small group of people in the Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania area and then to draw up his general theory about African values, African philosophies, African normative systems, to me is a very dangerous approach to the study of African religion and African values.

There is a need for a systematic study and clarification of the conceptions that African people have of the ultimate deity. Once we have all the systematic studies, we can then sit down and draw upon the generality of the evidence and come up with a standardized paradigm to agree upon which enables us to have a meaningful understanding of the religiosity of the African. Thank you.

Deotis Roberts: I will make a brief response. I am open to insights which have come out in the comments of the panelists. For the most part, I agree with them. There is one point which was brought out by the first two speakers to which I should respond—that is, the audacity of attempting to deal with the subject matter in view of the fact that any attempt to do so from a Western orientation would be a distortion of the material. We have had that kind of problem as Black scholars who have had to make a place for ourselves as scholars within and be certified in the academic world by those who had real appreciation neither for some of the presuppositions of our thought nor the fact that we represent a different dimension of experience and thought. So it is not a new battle. Whether I am talking to German scholars or American white scholars or anyone in the West, I am constantly involved with the problem of how to deal with the Black religious experience and yet maintain integrity within a community of scholars who have no real appreciation for the kind of experience we are trying to interpret. That same kind of thing is involved here. If we are going to have some communication, not only internal communication but communication with people who have different experiences and different presuppositions, then we are going to have to do the kind of thing that I attempted to do. It does not mean that it is the best way, or the only way, but it is one of those ways that we will have to explore in order to make communication move in both directions. Our work here is exploratory, only the beginning. As we have dialogues like this, when Africans themselves can open the doors for us, we will be able to go forward.

I certainly share Dr. Botchway's criticism of Mbiti. Mbiti is one of the persons who has been acclaimed as a churchman and as a scholar primarily because of his visibility in the West; the literature he has produced is widely read over against others who have other points of view who have not been exposed in the West as much as he has. Hopefully the time has come when others' works can become known to those of us who do not have the privilege of an in-depth encounter with African culture and religion; then we can compare critically what others say about African culture, thought, and belief with what Mbiti has been saying. We need to know more and more about what others think.

William Jones: I would like to introduce some African communalism at this point as a change in our previous directions and open the conversation to members of the audience.

Andrew Wilson (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): I am interested in communalism. In Christianity, you get the concept that *all* people are brothers, children of God; and I wonder if, in African religions, they also have this kind of universalism. This could be helpful in breaking down some of the tribal barriers which are causing conflict in Africa. Is universalism one of the Christian imports? Is the family or communal idea limited only to the tribe, or is it universal?

Deotis Roberts: One of the strong points of African traditional religion is its emphasis on communalism in a concrete and particular form. The weakness in the Christian emphasis on brotherhood is that it is universalized and abstract. Black theologians have certainly emphasized the need for a breakthrough in terms of concretizing and particularizing brotherhood. If we begin with a meaningful extended-family model, where kinship and concrete personal relations really have some currency, then we could move from the particular to the universal and retain some meaning. I met a man at a meeting on world religions who said, "I love everybody," and then he told me his neighbor was Marian Anderson. You know, she is not difficult to love, because she is a woman who is an unusual person by any human standard. But that does not mean he could love someone who is unlovable by his standards. What the Christian faith says is that we have to love the unlovable. "Who is my neighbor?" is not an easy question to deal with, because it implies that we might have to love someone who is not a Marian Anderson but just an ordinary human being, a concrete person in the flesh. If we can begin with that kind of understanding of communalism, as Christians, and then move to universalism, we can have some real meaning. African traditional religions have something vital to say in terms of kinship that is important for our understanding of the church and its mission in the world.

Victor Wan-Tatah: Communalism in Africa has several stages. It begins with the family, the extended family, moves to the tribe, the clan, and the people in the province; it is not limited. As long as we are thinking in terms of the contribution of African religions to Christianity, we can see the universal concept, which we have borrowed from Christianity, to be a kind of fortification of our original idea to widen the embrace of the communal aspect to all of African life. We have to say the clan sets the limit; the Christian concept would help to broaden that. On the other hand, African religion on its own can speak about the universe. Everybody living in the world created by God is a spiritual creature and has to look at other creatures in the same way that God looks at us. This is presupposed in African society. The ways the people respond to each other, up to the elders in the hierarchy, are, in effect, a reflection of the kind of relationship which God has with us and his creation. Another thing which helps to further the notion of the extended family in society is hospitality. If you are hospitable to a stranger, then you accept that stranger as somebody, one of you.

Shawn Byrne: The family structure in Africa is an element which could be very valuable to Christianity. As Dr. Roberts said, Christianity is too ethereal, too abstract, too generalized. But the African family is a very concrete physical thing. And yet the idea needs to be expanded. Here we have two complementary elements which could enrich one another. I see the relevance of the Christ-event, the One who has overcome family limitations, tribal limitations, and the limits of nationalism, who is the Man for all men, for all beings, the One for others, the Servant of all. The problem with Christianity is that, while it would criticize tribalism, its house has fallen into denominationalism, a kind of spiritual tribalism.

Kwame Gyekye: The African is immediately involved in his religion. There is no dichotomy between belief and commitment. The African participates in life and thus brings about religion. The contribution is there in living. Religion is not a tissue of theologies and well-laundered concepts. Religion is life and life is religion. This is where traditional African background has immediate significance for people who have accepted the Christian religion.

My other point is about Black Americans and, for that matter, any non-African scholar not being quite able to understand Africa. I do not go along with that. I think any scholar, non-African or not, who is very serious about his work and has gone to live among Africans, can make a good, original contribution to theories of African culture. One's method influences his analysis, that is true;

but I believe an African is not necessarily more objective than a foreign scholar on African culture. It depends upon how responsible the scholar wants to be. It depends upon how thorough he is. It depends upon his own awareness of the possibilities within foreign ideas and concepts. It will be a big job for him.

William Jones: Shall we terminate for lunch? Warren, will you express our thanks for the food?

Warren Lewis: The prayer of gratitude for our food today is the prayer of a hungry man. There are many people in Africa who will not eat in a week what you are about to consume in one meal. Remember them as you pray and eat.

> God of our fathers, I lie down without food; I lie down hungry, although others have eaten and lie down full. Even if it be but a polecat or a little rock-rabbit, give me and I shall be grateful! I cry to God, Father of my ancestors.
>
> (Barolong Tribe of South Africa)

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION I

William Jones: For the first of our afternoon sessions, we have an honored guest, Dr. Samuel Erivwo, of Nigeria, who is currently the visiting professor of African Religions at Union Theological Seminary here in New York. Dr. Erivwo received his B.A. and Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. He is also an Anglican priest, and will speak to us this afternoon on the topic, "God and Man in African Belief." I would like now to introduce the members of our panel.

Dr. Ekwueme Felix Okoli, from Nigeria, received his B.A. in Classics from Colorado University, his M.A. in Classics from Columbia; he has another M.A., in Public Law and Government, also from Columbia; and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the New School for Social Research in New York City. Currently, he is director of Afro-American Studies at the New York City Community College of City University.

Our next panelist is Dr. Kamuti Kiteme, from Kenya. He is Associate Professor of Education at City University of New York. He received his B.S. from Fairleigh Dickinson University, his M.S. from Bank Street College in New York, and a Ph.D. in Education from Yeshiva University, New York City. He is the author of some eighteen publications and has a book now at the publisher's on reshaping African education.

Our next panelist is Father Patrick Primeaux of the Society of Mary, the Marist Fathers. Currently, he is Professor of Systematic Theology and Sacramental Theology at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Louisiana. He indicates that he is a Cajun from south Louisiana. He has a B.A. in French from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, and an M.A. in Theology from St. Michael's College in Toronto. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D.

Finally, Dr. Kwame Gyekye, who received his B.A. from the University of Ghana, his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is a specialist in the area of Greco-Arabic philosophy, and currently he is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Ghana and visiting Professor of Philosophy at the University of Florida, Gainesville. He has done several articles on Islamic philosophy and is presently working on a manuscript on African philosophical ideas.

I'd like to present to you at this time Dr. Erivwo.

GOD AND MAN IN AFRICAN BELIEF

Dr. Samuel Erivwo

Having seen the African proverb on the board (proverb on the wall: "A single peg cannot stretch out a skin") I decided to mention one too, which you may want to add to that one. My people say: "A single finger cannot remove a louse from a head." Needless to say, a head infested with lice is sick. And if we can say that the religions of the world are supposed to give leadership, give direction to humanity, and yet are not able to do so, as within Christianity where there are unhappy divisions about which we in the church have been praying in vain for so many years, then we may say that the head is sick. For us to be able to restore the world to wholeness, we need unity.

The next thing I want to offer is a protest. I want to protest for not being asked to speak first. Dr. Deotis Roberts said almost everything that I wanted to say, so I really want to protest; but then I remembered that I am an African, and he is an elder, and I should give him the respect that is due him. (Laughter) In any case, the Yoruba people have another saying, a proverb: "Where the foreleg of an animal steps, that is where his hind leg follows." So I have taken the seat you have occupied, Deotis, and I am going to give you (the audience) what he has already given you; but I trust, as a friend of mine has already reminded me at lunch, since this time it will be coming from me, there may be something new also in the presentation.

Dr. Roberts mentioned Emil Ludwig's notorious comment to Edwin Smith, now so well known. In his conversation with Smith, in Khartoum, Ludwig said he could not believe that Africans, whom he described as savages, could conceive of God. As we were reminded this morning: he said, "How can the untutored African conceive God?...How can this be?...Deity is a philosophical concept which savages are incapable of framing." And yet I, an African, am being asked to come and comment and talk on God and man! Of course we know that Emil Ludwig was wrong; and to further show that he was wrong, let me begin, as we did in the morning session, with a prayer of the Yoruba people, which they usually address to God in the court of God—I mean in a proper religious setting. It is not a prayer that is just said when somebody is confronted with a certain risk and then offers what Parrinder calls "partial prayers addressed to God."

This is a prayer that is detailed, rather like some of the ones we listened to before. One of the Yoruba words for God is "Osanobwa." And the prayer runs thus: "Osanobwa...We, your children, are gathered here to worship you. Give us peace. Give us unity. Give us health. Make our crops fruitful. Make our women fertile. Anyone here who is unhappy with this, our prayer, You, Osanobwa, know him. Give to him the portion you consider apt for him. Remove him from our midst. As many as you have created, so many should you save." That is a prayer which the people have been offering to God long, long before the advent of Westernism and Christianity.

So we are really in a position to talk about God and man in African belief. There is a sense in which anthropology is theology, and theology is anthropology. Every statement about God is, usually, also a statement about man. It is hardly possible to think and talk about the one without the other. The notion of authority in respect to God, namely that God's existence is not contingent on man's being, may well be a non sequitur. All God-talks are done by man. I therefore regard the theme of God and man as the most crucial one to reflect upon in a conference of this nature, organized by a theological institution.

On this particular occasion, the reflection on the theme is from the African perspective. But this is a difficult task. Any attempt to describe God accurately must be seen as futile, for each person's or people's description will reflect their dispositions and situations. God can hardly be described in the abstract, as Greek philosophers tried to do, calling Him the "Absolute," the "One," the "Ultimate," and so on. These concepts tell us very little about God. I think that the task I have before me is not easy.

I am reminded of a poem I read when I was a child about blind men who went to see an elephant. And how could blind men see an elephant? The first stumbled on his body and came rejoicing that he knew what an elephant was like. The elephant is very like a wall. Another one groped there and felt the floppy ear of the elephant and came back confident, declaring he knew what an elephant was like. The elephant is very like a fan. And yet another walked straight there and happened to embrace the elephant's hind leg and came back claiming all the others were wrong. The elephant is very like a trunk. And yet another who picked his way there, happened to grasp the elephant's dangling tail, and ran back proclaiming all others missed the elephant, for the elephant is very like a snake. And so on and so forth. Each of them, describing only the part of the elephant he felt, was partly right and partly wrong. Each person or peoples, who are religious, attempting to describe God, the indescribable one, must experience the same limitations as the blind men.

A story from Islamic tradition illustrates this same truth. Muhammad, we are told, was taken in a vision to the Heavenly Jerusalem to hear God's words. All he saw was a voluminous garment whose beginning he could not see. The time of day was neither morning nor evening, night nor day, not dusk nor twilight. An angel approached him and told him they were all expecting to hear what form of greeting he would use for God. This is to illustrate once more the mystery that surrounds God.

My third story: A thinker, a philosopher, set out to reflect, as we are trying to do, and contemplate the incontemplatable form of God. He said to himself, "Ah, the world has been created for so long a time, is so many billion years old; if God created the world, God must be very, very old. He would have hoary hair and a wrinkled face." This contemplator was having fantasies, creating images in his wide and vain imagination as he moved along the lonely path. He suddenly came to the bank of a mighty river, where he saw a figure digging a very tiny hole by the side of the river, and with a bowl was bringing water from the river to the hole. The contemplator was astonished at that strange behavior. He interrupted the man, questioning him as to what he was doing, to which the strange person replied that he was emptying the river into the hole. The thinker laughed and thought it was a foolish and futile attempt, and he told the man so. The strange man retorted, "You mind your business. You go on with what you were doing; before you finish your task, I will probably have finished with mine."

All of these stories serve to illustrate one point: the futility of attempting a clear and accurate description or concept of God. However, this is not to suggest that we are not to attempt to form an image, the conception of him or her. Be cautioned that the image we are forming is only an image and, for all we know, may be an imperfect image, touching only on one of many aspects of God. To know God cannot be fully known, that he is knowable and known only to the extent he chooses to disclose himself, that our knowledge of him will invariably reflect our own presuppositions, the projection of our own image—that is the point which Ludwig Feuerbach so forcefully made when he said, and I quote him, "In religion, man has to view himself alone, the infinity of his own nature; or in regarding himself as the object of God, as the end of the divine activity, man is an object to himself, his own end, and aim. Man made God in his own image."

This same point was made by Aylward Shorter who says, and I quote him, "Man identifies as sacred the ultimate implied by his own experience; like the little fish's idea of heaven, man's idea of the ultimate, that is, of God, is an enlarged projection of his own world." And he quotes Robert Brooks' poem on the little fishes thus, "Somewhere beyond space and time is wetter water, slimier slime. And there, they trust, there swims that one, who swam when rivers were begun, immense of fishy form and mind, squamos, omnipotent, and kind. And under that almighty fin the littlest fish may enter in." As far as the fishes were concerned, that is heaven. It is this truth, the fact that man can only think of God and conceive him in his own image, if he must meaningfully think of him at all, which provides the justification for the postulation of a Black God in Black theology.

Enough of preliminary remarks. Suffice it to say that the descriptions and conceptions of God which we will enumerate are a reflection of a particular people. When we have finished, it may well turn out to be that we have not really talked about God at all, but about the Africans. But we must still begin. First, God is creator. This is the conviction of the Africans as well as of the rest of the human race. Africans have various myths of creation and different names to designate God as creator. The names usually denote molding or fashioning. Thus the Yoruba of the Niger Delta called God "Umanomuhu," which literally means "the molder who molded the person." The Ibo, whose most popular and principal name for God is "Chuku," use another term "Chineke" (Chi-na-eke), the "Chi" or Spirit who created, when they wish to draw attention to God as creator. The Akan call him "Odomankoma"; the Yoruba, "Eleda"; the Jukun, "Aban"; the Ila, "Lubumba," and so on. The Elawed, we are told by Miss Smith, "Bumba," which comes in "Lumbumba," is usually employed of woman forming or molding a pot with her hands.

Why are all the ethnic groups not able to give details of how God created the world and man? They all believe and state that God created everything. According to the Nupe of Nigeria, "Ibn-so-ko," which is their name for God, did not create, neither did the world create. And the Yoruba confess that whatever is not seen, perceived, or experienced, was never created by God. Certain ethnic groups have myths of creation. According to the Efik, in the plateau state of Nigeria, "Bene," their name for God, created this world out of the sun, or as others say, from a red substance which was very hot initially; as it fell and cooled off, the whole world came into existence. And yet others say that the world was created from the rainbow. It fell from the sky and broke into small pieces. As it burst and broke into pieces, human beings and other living creatures emerged from it.

The Yoruba people have a detailed myth of creation. According to it, "Olodumare," their name for God who as creator is known as "Eleda," decided to have the world created. He summoned one of his ministers, Orisanla by name, who is the archdivinity in the Yoruba's elaborate pantheon of divinities (there are as many as seventeen-hundred divinities), and commissioned him to create the earth. He then gave him the necessary tools for the task: a sack containing loose earth, five hens and a pigeon. Before this time, the earth was a watery, marshy waste, and was a haunting ground for the divinities. Orisanla went to the watery, marshy waste, put the loose earth on a convenient spot, and set to work. He then scattered the loose earth to cover a wide area. This done, Orisanla returned to report to Olodumare, who then dispatched an inspector general, the chameleon, to inspect the work. In his first report, the inspector general detected that, although the place was indeed wide enough, it was not dry enough. It was after a second visit before he could pass the work as both wide and dry enough for habitation.

The Yoruba say that this place is "Ife," which in the Yoruba language means "wide." Ife-Ife is the ancestral home of the Yoruba people, and, they would claim, of the whole world. In spite of the fact that all ethnic groups concur that God created the world, not all of them have this type of interesting myth of creation. This myth, of course, raises some problems, as it does not, for example, account for the origin of the hen and pigeon, or the animals or the place the divinities haunted before the creation. But these questions do not bother the typical Yoruba or African who, when asked, will still say, "God created everything." As already noted, the so-called being did not create, neither did the world create it. Which implies that Africans believe that creation is *ex nihilo*. But it is important, I think, to realize that Africans do not actually account for the creation of *all* things, nor do they regard it a compelling necessity, before affirming that God created, that whatever was never seen in their experience was never created.

Of Yoruba people who do not have a clear myth of creation, there is a myth which speaks of the coming-into-being of the world in a way to suggest that the world was either self-existent or that it evolved from a storehouse of power which has its origin with God. The myth is, in fact, in relation to two creatures—the chameleon, again, and the toucan. The two were involved in the dispute to ascertain the order. The chameleon argued that when he came into being, the earth had just evolved or been formed, and was therefore not firm, which is why in treading on it he took his time, lest the earth give way under his feet. The toucan replied if that was so, then he, toucan, was older, because when he appeared in the world, neither the sky nor the earth had been formed; hence when his father died, he interred the body in his thigh, and when his mother died, he interred the body in his arm, which is why he has fat thighs and arms.

However, these stories are theological, that is, they explain why things are what they are. The point of this particular story is this: the toucan speaks of the forming or coming into being of what we call in Yoruba "a ka a ko mana," as if the world evolved on its own; but, as was earlier stated, in spite of this story, which tends to point to evolutionary theory, the Yoruba people still say that God created everything and everyone. Man is therefore a creature. If God is the creator, man is a creature of God. The Yoruba say that Orisanla, after creating the physical earth, was further commissioned by God to equip the earth, which he did by bringing sixteen persons to the world. But in addition, it is Orisanla who molds the physical form of the person, after which God adds that something which makes a person a living being.

The Yoruba word "ori" or "ori-nu" for the essential self is related to one of their ancient names for God, Orise. The Ibo name "Chi" for the personality-soul is the Ibo's principal name for God, "Chikwu." Chikwu means, as we already said, literally, Great Chief. The point here is that Africans believe that man created by God is vitally related to him or her, through the personality-soul. We could give other examples but we won't because of time. Man is thoroughly related to God through the personality-soul, which the Akan call "Kra," the Yoruba call "Ori," the Bini call "Ihe," the Lodagaa "Urindi," the Nupe call "Koosi," and so on. As a creature of God, who has something of God, man is responsible to and, therefore, addressable by God. This is why, as will be pointed out later, man will have to account for his actions in afterlife.

But before then, let us consider another conception of God which Africans hold. God is a father or mother. This is a view widely held by Africans, although some earlier investigators have felt that God was not construed by certain ethnic groups as a person, but merely as a force. However, not only is God seen as a person, but as a father or mother. The Barolong of the plateau state designate God "Dovu," which literally means, "Father-son." The Molvu, also from the same state, call him Gana, "Father-man," man being their normal word for God. The Angas call God Mat'nam; "Mat" means mother, "nam" means God. Although it is said that the prefix "Mat" was later dropped, presumably a consequence of male chauvinism. The Ejowed word, "Tomuno," God, is feminine, as the Ewe-Manu is feminine. Both the Edo of Nigeria and the Ewe of the Republic of Benin are matrilineal. The point here, however, is that many African peoples see the filial relationship between God and human beings, in spite of the fact that piacular sacrifices are not usually offered to him or her frequently. Such offerings are made more to the ancestors and divinities who are construed as his agents. Even so, the Supreme Being is the ultimate recipient of the offerings.

That God is father or mother obviously implies the brotherhood or sisterhood of mankind. It is perhaps pertinent to mention at this point that, contrary to the viewpoint popularly held by earlier investigators, African traditional religion has been shown by research not to be polytheistic, because amongst each ethnic group there is always the concept of, and firm belief in, the Supreme Being, who is not of the same rank and file as the divinities. That he is not one of the divinities, and is superior to them will be expostulated on later. African traditional religion has been rightly described by Professor E. B. Idowu as either diffused or implicit monotheism. I have another one to add, bureaucratic monotheism, which I'll add later.

Because the divinities are ministers of the Supreme Being, who in his superlative greatness is far above them, the Taro of the plateau state in Nigeria, for example, regard the divinities and the ancestors as one and the same, and as offspring of the Supreme Being. To the extent that the divinities and ancestors are seen as offspring of the Supreme Being, the latter is consequently regarded as the Great Ancestor, a point which Joseph Danquah and Professor Harry Sawyerr have both so clearly made.

Man is therefore the child or progeny of God, whom he approaches occasionally directly but more often through the divinities and ancestors. The Akan of Ghana, the Yoruba of Nigeria, and the Kikuyu of Kenya, amongst others, have courts of the Supreme Being, where worship was accorded to him. The Ashanti, a subgroup of the Akan, actually have a priest dedicated to Onyame, God or life. In the pre-colonial period, the worship of Onyame was very prominent. A temple was built for him and a tree called the Onyame-dwe, tree of God, characterized his altar, where, on a Saturday, once every year, an elaborate offering was made to him. A sheep or lamb was killed and offered. The blood was allowed to pour onto the ground and pieces of meat were hung onto the branches of Onyame-dwe. So impressed was Rattray with the Ashanti's conception of God that he equated it with the Hebraic concept of *YWHW*, and I quote him: "In a sense, therefore, it is true that this great Supreme Being, the conception of whom has been innate in the minds of the Ashanti, is the Jehovah of the Israelites. It was He who of old left His own dwelling above the vaulted sky and entered the tent of meeting, where was His earthly abode."

The necessity for these details about the Ashanti is to underscore the point that there are Africans who worship God. Granted the frequent association of God with either the sun or sky, and the many myths of the withdrawal of the sky from man, point to the alienation between man and God and indicate the transcendence of God. The mistake of earlier investigators, who saw and described God in Africa as *Deus incautus et remotus* or *Deus otiosus*, an uncertain, withdrawn and lazy God, ought to be avoided. Africans recognize a filial relationship between God and man and see him as Father and Ancestor, who accord worship to him, addressing prayers to him generally, but more particularly in times of trouble and disaster, like famine or epidemic. In this, they are like the rest of the human race in the conception of and the attitude toward God. To say this, is not to say that all ethnic groups have this same understanding of and attitude toward God and accord him equal amounts of worship.

God is unique. We have said that African traditional religion has been shown to be monotheistic on the ground that the Supreme Being is never, among Africans, regarded as just one of the divinities. As Idowu described it, the conception of God is reflected in his name Olodumare among the Yoruba. "God," I quote Idowu, "is supreme, superlatively great, incomparable and insurpassable in majesty, excellent in attributes, stable, unchanging, constant, reliable." God is unique, and several myths of Africans demonstrate this. We mention three briefly. First, Orisanla, the Yoruba divinity, who was commissioned by the Supreme Being to mold human beings and was endowed with free will to mold them according to his taste, and who consequently gives the different peoples of the world their different pigmentation and complexions, which is why some of you are white, some of us are black, others are red. Orisanla was dissatisfied with the enormous freedom and responsibility which God gave to him. He therefore decided to spy on Olodumare so that he could gain secret knowledge of a power that was Olodumare's prerogative, that is, the power of imparting something in beings that Orisanla had molded so that they could become living beings. To do this, Orisanla hid inside the room where he had molded the beings, instead of leaving the place as he was expected to do, while Olodumare gives life to the beings Orisanla molded. The all-seeing and all-knowing Olodumare saw through the heart and knew the intentions of Orisanla. He therefore sent him into a deep slumber from which he awoke to discover the beings had already been given life.

Second, all the divinities contrived to take over the control of the universe from Olodumare... we've been experiencing so many coups! It was a coup they planned. They went to him and demanded that he should hand over power so that they could take over some control of the universe, at least for sixteen years. Olodumare saw their folly. He agreed to give them a trial, but suggested that they should first try it for sixteen days, and see how it worked out, to which they readily consented. Before any other takes over, the old should quit; accordingly, Olodumare switched off the machinery of the universe. All the seventeen hundred divinities were at a loss as to how to get the machinery re-started. Everything was at a standstill. Before eight days were over, the divinities found themselves in real trouble and utter confusion. Every means devised to keep the world going failed—the heaven withheld its rains, the rivers ceased to flow, rivulets became clotted with dead leaves, yams sprouted but did not develop, the ears of corn filled but did not ripen. When divination, which is as famous as the oracle of Delphi, became dumb, the divinities now realized their folly, they ran back to the Supreme Being to confess their incompetence and admit his uniqueness and their dependence upon him.

Third, a myth of the Bini, which is very close to my area, tells of how Olokun, the archdivinity in the Bini pantheon, challenges Osanobwa, the Supreme Being, to a beauty contest. The Supreme Being agrees, and asks the archdivinity to go and get ready, and afterwards sends word to him. Olokun then went and dressed gorgeously. He marched confidently to Osanobwa's palace, to send word to him. On coming to the gate, however, he saw Osanobwa's messenger at the gate, putting on exactly the same dress as Olokun had. The archdivinity then decided to go and change. He came back with a new set, but to his amazement, he found Osanobwa's messenger in the same attire. He did this for seven times, and each time he was disappointed to find that the messenger was always wearing the same dress. He then came to the obvious conclusion that if he could not surpass Osanobwa's messenger in dressing, then there was no hope of matching Osanobwa, let alone surpassing him. As it turned out, Osanobwa's messenger is, once more, the chameleon.

These three stories illustrate very clearly African conviction that God is unique and incomparably great. God is good is our next point.

This conviction is expressed in various African names of God, in personal names and in sayings. The Yoruba call God, as we have said, "Osanobwa," which means, "he who calls and asks blessings too," "he who blesses as he sustains the world." The Ibo, "Osibuluwe", or the Bini, "Osanobwa", have similar meanings, in fact they come from a common root. The Yoruba also say only the cloth cut for a person by Ogun, who is their other name for God, is adequate to clothe him, testifying to the fact that God is our sufficiency. They also call God "Obutak Boduwuwu," the plantain leaf, which can adequately shelter the entire world, an indication that God is able to protect all. Such personal names as "Oguna Okuku," "God is helper," "Oguna Okudawa," "God makes one great," "Ogun Obrume," "God bless me," are expressive of the people's conviction about God's goodness and love. Many other ethnic groups have similar names and expressions which point to God's goodness and kindness. The Taro of the plateau state call a baby girl born after a long period of expectation, "Nyambien," meaning "God is good." The Junkun have such names as "Magai," meaning "the greatest gift," "Mataketswain," "the Creator of the world," and so on. Africans are convinced that God is pre-eminently good and kind, and man is the object of God's goodness. The creation, preservation and guidance which God gives to man sometimes directly, and at other times through his ministers, are expressions of God's goodness and of his love.

The next point I want to make, rather briefly, is: God is King. That the good God is King, is very obvious in African thinking. The Yoruba call him "Obaorun," "King of heaven." The Ibo, "Eze-elu," "King above." The Mende call God the Chief, he is King of kings and Lord of lords. He rules over all; earthly kings and rulers are his instruments and derive authority from him, because they are human beings and endowed with freedom; they are responsible and are accountable to him, here and especially in afterlife, because justice and righteousness characterize the rule of God.

Which takes us to the next and last point we wish to make: God is judge. Africans believe that God is judge. He is the righteous judge. True, they also believe that he is very patient, which is why they sometimes run to the agents and the ministers. They believe that he is very patient, but his justice finally prevails. For this reason, the African who feels oppressed and feels that he is unable to obtain justice here on earth refers the matter to God and leaves it with him, who is the righteous judge. The Yoruba call him "the King who judges in silence." The Yoruba describe his court as the last court of appeal. Often God, as judge, manifests his judgment and wrath through divinities of wrath, solar and thunder divinities: Sango or Jakuta in Yoruba, Amadioha in Ibo, Sokogba in Nupe, Xeviosa in Ewe, and so on. These divinities are a concretization of the wrath of God. Anyone killed by lightning is believed to have been killed by God for his notoriety. Every person who, as was previously pointed out, was endowed with freedom by God, has a link with God through the personality-soul, which is called *kra, ori, uri-nu* or *chi* or so on, and is finally responsible and accountable to God. It is therefore incumbent on him to order this life in accordance with the will of God, as expressed in his society. True, he has a destiny, and is predestined to fulfill that destiny, but his character, as the Yoruba say, can mar and ruin his destiny. He must therefore properly relate both to God, to the divinities, and ancestors on the vertical dimension, and also to his fellow man, particularly to his family, community, town, clan, and society, on the horizontal dimension. In after-life, he will have to give account of his life here on earth before the ancestors and divinities and also before God, and will be rewarded or retributed according to his desserts. According to some ethnic groups, whether or not a person is reincarnated and the form of reincarnation that happens to him is dependent on the manner of life he lives now on earth.

To conclude, then, according to African belief, God is the Creator; man, a creature. God, the Father or Mother; man, the child, which already implies brotherhood and sisterhood for mankind. God is the ancestor; man, the progeny. God is unique, infinite, and good; man is not unique, is finite, and object of God's goodness. God is king; man, a subject in God's kingdom. God is the final judge; man, the one standing under judgement in God's court. Whether or not man is discharged and acquitted in God's court finally depends ultimately on his relationship to God as expressed in his relationship with his fellow man. Perhaps this thought, logically pursued, can lead to Ritschl's conception of the Kingdom of God as, and I quote, "the moral unification of the human race through action prompted by universal love of our neighbor." However, what we have described represents, in our judgement, the understanding of God and man in African belief before we are judged. Thank you.

Discussion

Ekwueme F. Okoli: I think Dr. Erivwo did a very good job of portraying the various nuances in African philosophy of God. I think we can see that Africa has a philosophy, which should be studied not only by Africans but by every person who feels that he can bring to it that detached, scholarly attitude that enables somebody to view things as they are presented. Dr. Erivwo's statement is a rebuttal, to a certain extent, of Mbiti's idea that Africans do not have a concept of the future, and I'm very happy with that. However, there is a point at which I would like him to clarify for the audience the issue of a personal soul. What, then, is judged, or what suffers; what comes back in reincarnation—is it another aspect of the soul of man? Is this personal soul the only aspect of spirit that exists in man?

Samuel Erivwo: In a recent lecture, I went into detail about the soul. There are so many souls. The Akan speak not only of the "sumsum," which means "the shadow," but also of the "akra," which means the personality-soul. The "sumsum" is the one which leaves the body and engages in activities when you dream.

The question of reincarnation is a difficult one. It's not the whole of the personal soul that comes back. There are several souls, and only some of them are reincarnated; in fact, Africans believe that one person can be reincarnated simultaneously in different persons, yet the personal soul of that original person is still in the vicinity of God, "Aniacum."

Ekwueme F. Okoli: The personality-soul, is it a part of the divine in man, or is it one of the souls that goes and comes? What is divine essence in man and how does it relate to the cosmic force or being?

Samuel Erivwo: Let us recognize that Africa, as everybody knows, is a vast continent, and that there are so many different languages, cultures, and ways of thinking. However, to say this, is not to suggest that one cannot find unanimity in African thought. Let's take the Ibo people. "Chukwu" is the word for God, and significantly, the personality-soul is called, "Chi," which is "something of God." One can conclude from that alone that there's something of God in man, the divine element in man; it is that which adds the double, the guardian angel; the Yoruba people, as I've said, call it "ori," and when somebody has a narrow escape, he says "Erimess Sme," that is, my soul has delivered me, saved me. But he can also say, "God has delivered me." He is saying the same thing, which means that the personality-soul is that which connects man to God. That's how I understand it.

Kamuti Kiteme: I have no quarrels with Professor Erivwo. I'd like to point out that not only is he a theologian but, if you listen carefully to him, he has taught us another aspect which is very, very important in traditional African culture and society, and that is teaching by oral literature, which is extremely rich all over the continent. His stories, his riddles, and his proverbs, all are replete with a message. We usually do this in traditional societies to stimulate our listeners, the children, when we are telling stories. But, there is no telling a story just for the sake of it. The brother is not only a theologian, but also a true African in many ways.

Just for the record: I come from the same area as Professor Mbiti. As I sat here listening about the time concept and how it was challenged—I told Mbiti this last summer, so he is aware of this weakness in his concept of time. He got into trouble by trying to translate an element in African religions into Swahili, instead of our language, which is the language I share with him, known as Kikamba. This is not to say, by the way, that Mbiti studied just one group, the Akamba (that is my group), and Kikuyus; that is not true. Mbiti really does stand out as a giant in terms of making generalizations, as Professor Erivwo said. He picks up this group and that, and arrives at a point where he makes a generalization. Some of the comments towards Mbiti were just a little unfair.

Just to add to what the brother (Dr. Erivwo) is saying about the African concept of God, I would like to bring out one or two points: When the brother says that the African concept of God is both creator as well as a father-mother, that might create some confusion. In my ethnic group, when we say that God is a creator as well as a father and mother, the difference between this and the Judeo-Christian God is this: the Judeo-Christian God is a creator in the sense that an engineer or architect or a mechanic creates. Remember how he created Adam and Eve from clay and was separate from them; and he breathed a breath of life into the pieces of clay, and they started running around as human beings. He created by looking at it; or He would say, "Let there be light," and He looked at light from a distance and said, "It is beautiful, it is good." If you have a son, in a way you created him, but not as an engineer created a building or a car. A child coming from you is some kind of creation, but he is a part of you. When an engineer creates a car, that car is not part of the engineer; they are separate and they live separately. But in the concept of God in the African sense, that child is yours; you are God, you are creator, you are father, you are begetter, rather than an architect.

There is a long chain of communal relationships between the unborn, the living, the dead, the living dead. The only people who can tell us how tall George Washington was, whether he was tempermental, whether he was a kind man, are the ones who lived with him. Two hundred years later we absolutely cannot reproduce the physical characteristics of George Washington. But we can see him in a spiritual form, in a spiritual conceptualization. If we go back to our ancestors (and all of us here must have ancestors), if we go back, say, 100 years ago, 200 years, 300 years, 4,000 years, 5,000 years, and now they're talking about 4 million years on the African continent, those people are so far away that they lose their human characteristics; they become spiritual divinities. And if you go all the way back, according to the mythologies of different ethnic groups, then the first person is our father or our mother, and it is this first person from whom we all descended. There is a chain of relationships from the first person to us, as well as to our children who are unborn, running in our veins, perhaps in the form of chromosomes; so that, when we sacrifice, we pour libation on the ground, not because we are worshipping the ancestors, but because we are sharing with the ancestors who are buried in the ground. You would be greedy to eat and forget that your grandfather is buried in that ground; so, you pour something there to share with him. When you are eating, you are sharing with the living and those unborn kids in your body, and what you are pouring on the ground is an extension of communal survival, communal sharing, between the living and the departed and the spirit of the divinity, and God himself.

Samuel Erivwo: I agree entirely with my brother (Dr. Kiteme). God is creator and father and ancestor in Africa. God begets. However, I do not quite agree with his representation of the Judeo-Christian concept of God creating man; clearly there is evidence in the Bible that there is something of God in man. He said, "Let us create man in our image," (Gen. 1:26). When God breathed into man, he was putting something of himself into man. Paul, quoting a Greek poet, with approval, said: "In him we live and move and have our being," (Acts 17:28) in fact stating the same truth which is found in African religion.

Father Patrick Primeaux: In one of his lesser known, shorter articles, Richard Niebuhr distinguishes between the language of theology and the concrete language of faith. He claims that the concrete language of faith is primary; by that he means prayer, liturgy, credal formulations, and sacraments. The Roman and Anglican traditions would tend to stress sacraments, as opposed to the Reformed tradition, which would stress Word; it is at that point that Roman Catholicism, Roman Christianity has something to offer to this deliberation. Especially since Vatican II, there has been a movement towards the establishment of liturgy, the ritual, the liturgical life of the community as normative. Among some there is still a determined effort to express the new movement within the categories of neo-scholasticism; others are trying to discover this expression in socio-political categories of life in American theology. What both groups are trying to say is how man meets God and man meets and experiences his brothers and sisters in the world.

We have moved from the point at which we actually experience ourselves experiencing God and one another to a theological expression of that experience. I'm referring to a direct coordination and consistency between ritual itself and conceptualization. Today both of our speakers spoke of God as creator, implying a sense of hierarchy, which Dr. Roberts said arises within the community itself, within the tribe; it is part of the function of living. It would seem that the sense of hierarchy would be related within the actual worship, the actual ritual of the community, similar to the way we as Catholics do—the priest stands before the worshipping community as a leader; he is set apart to perform cultic functions; he is a corporate personality representing the totality of the community. There are other ministers under him: readers, acolytes, ministers of communion. The priest with his co-ministers exercises a definite function within the community itself, not simply a liturgical or ritual function, but a very real one. To observe the relationship between an experience of life and an experience of God related in worship in African religious traditions may help us to realize the significance of the African religious traditions.

Francis Botchway: It appears, from Samuel's (Erivwo) lecture, that while there may be certain features common among African concepts of God, there may also be diverse features. This would suggest to me the need for a colloquium prior to the Global Congress of World Religions. Scholars—both African and non-African—need to work on various areas of African thought to bring together the results of their researches and reflections. I think it would be a good idea for someone to come up with profound analyses of the concept of God as held by the Kikuyus, the Yorubas, the Akans of Ghana, the Ibos, and others. Then we can better talk in terms of the African concept of God, the African concept of time, and so on and so forth. At this stage of scholarship on African religion and philosophy, it seems to me the approach should be what I call vertical, rather than horizontal—that is to say, one should just take up deep, profound analysis of the concepts of God held by various peoples of Africa; later we can pull these things together.

Having said that, I have three questions to put to Dr. Erivwo, if only to ask him to clarify for us these things. The first one is about the idea of God as a judge. I don't know whether he is taking his concept of God as a judge in the eschatological sense. Africans believe that God, the judge, punishes the evil-doer, but I think this activity is limited to this world. I'm not sure whether in African theology reincarnation is similar to resurrection. Certainly, it doesn't appear so. Reincarnation does not seem to imply bodily identity, whereas resurrection does. Reincarnation, rather, implies identity of the soul of the person who has passed away. It seems to me that African eschatology is silent on such questions as resurrection, judgement after death, heaven and hell. Therefore, it's not clear to me whether God in the African conception is going to punish and reward people after death.

The other question is about pantheism. Quite a number of scholars think in terms of pantheism when they talk about God, meaning that God is the totality of all things, and the totality of all things is God, so that God and the world are one. This idea also appears in some Western philosophies, such as Stoicism and Spinozaism. Kindly clarify that, particularly because Africans do believe in the reality of matter, and that matter is active. Matter is not inert or inactive or passive, so that one might think God is not inert or inactive or passive, as in Cartesian physics; matter has within itself an activating principle, so that one might think God is therefore in matter. God is in the universe, and that might be taken to imply pantheism; but, in fact, I'd suggest, it is not so.

My third question relates to the relationship between the Supreme Being "Onyame," "Olodumare," and the deities, which you call the divinities, and then the ancestors. Parrinder, for instance, is woefully wrong in his characterization of the relationships between God, the Supreme Being, and the nature spirits. I think this needs some clarification. These, I agree, are big questions; but if you can touch on them briefly. Thank you.

Samuel Erivwo: I suppose we have to keep on repeating that

Africa is vast, and therefore there are differences; but, we are able to discern certain elements that are common. For the first question—God is judge—I would say Africans primarily believe that judgment happens now; it begins here and now. But there are some ethnic groups who also believe there is judgment in afterlife. The Yoruba specifically say that in afterlife, the person-soul, the Oli, will give an account of his own life before Olodumare. The Akan believe that the personality-soul, the Akra, when it goes back to the city of God, from whence it came, if it did not complete its task, or if it committed sins, should come back and perfect itself. That's a kind of judgment. The Yoruba people believe there is what is called "the enemy." The enemy is the underworld; and the enemy is very real, too. There is the "enemy of the potsherd," which is the place where the wicked go. Another is the "proper enemy," where the ancestors go.

On the whole, Africans tend to believe that the state of the person after death is determined by the kind of burial that is given to him or her. If somebody is given an adequate and elaborate burial, that more or less shows that he is going to "the good enemy." Not to every person is a good burial given, because somebody who died a certain kind of death is believed to have already gone wrong, and therefore is denied a good burial. The denial of burial itself is part of the punishment, and he or she will not go to "the good enemy." The Ankas also believe that there is a place in afterlife which they describe as a huge mountain, divided into two parts. One part is for dogs, the bad people go there; the other part is full of meat, the good people go there. According to the Ankas, it is only the good people who will reincarnate. If you were bad, you are denied reincarnation. So, there is a form of judgment, but you don't find it everywhere. Basically, judgment begins here and continues into afterlife.

The second question—pantheism: I agree with you that the basic view is that God is in matter or there is something of God in matter, insofar as Africans believe that there is spirit in matter. But that is different from saying that matter is spirit. I would not use the word "pantheism"; rather, I would say panentheism; the spirit of God is in matter, but we don't equate the two. God is far above matter. If we accept pantheism, then we are saying, "matter is God," and stop. That is the distinction I would make.

The third question: the relationship between the Supreme Being and ancestors and divinities. I, too, think Parrinder was very wrong, and I criticized him in my thesis. I met him in Lancaster and called him aside and said, "Now, how did you come about this and that?" He said, "Oh, I'm prepared to accept what you have further discovered." He compared it to a triangle: the initial God is at the apex, and the ancestors are on either side, and then magic and medicine are at the base. Among certain ethnic groups, ancestors are regarded as more important than others, whereas in other ethnic groups, divinities are more important than ancestors. Among my own people, and, I guess, the Ashanti, the ancestors are more important; but, in Yorubaland, the divinities are most important. In relationship to the Supreme Being, we already said that in so far as things were created by him, human beings were specifically made by him and humanity made from him; ancestors and spirits also emanate from him, were created by him.

Francis Botchway: Parrinder also mentions that the Supreme Being is sometimes regarded as "co-equal."

Unidentified Speaker: We are confusing Western religion and African religion by saying that we Africans believe in the life after death. There is no such thing in African ideology or African religion. What they do believe is that after death the dead spirit comes to torment the wrongdoers. If I'm not generalizing, the people of Africa believe that God judges wrongdoers now and here, not then. For instance, if someone is killed by a car accident or lightning, Africans believe it is because he did something wrong—that is why God now punishes him.

Ekwueme F. Okoli: I think this question of punishment and crime deserves comment. We believe that a crime itself has two aspects. In addition to the individual's guilt for the crime—any crime—we have to sacrifice in order to restore balance within the community. We have certain sacrifices which are made when someone has committed a crime. There are also certain taboos which affect the whole community. The punishment is exacted by the community and by the land. In my own area, the land has an influence in punishing an individual for a crime. The community also punishes; and God, through the ancestors, sets certain types of punishment on anybody who commits a crime. But I don't think that we can say that God sits as a judge on every crime; there are agents through which God judges individuals within the community.

Samuel Erivwo: If what I heard was what the person who commented actually meant, then we cannot allow it to pass, namely that Africans do not believe in afterlife. Unless you are thinking of a particular ethnic group, for instance I have heard that the Maasai do not believe in afterlife, but that still has to be investigated, because I don't know whether the person who told me that in fact carried out detailed research. All the ethnic groups I have dealt with believe in afterlife very firmly, very, very firmly; that has nothing to do with Christianity or Western beliefs at all.

Unidentified Speaker: If I'm not mistaken, this belief in afterlife is from Europe, brought to Africa by white men. Africans in my area believe that after death, there is no life except in the case of a spirit of the dead person who comes back to torment wrongdoers, but not the man himself.

Samuel Erivwo: O.K., taking your own people...But even the spirit comes back to torment wrongdoers, already implying belief in afterlife.

Tadaaki Shimmyo (Graduate Student, Drew University): If African religion is free from Greek metaphysical influence and the European theories of immutability, then there is much more room for natural theology than in traditional Christian theology. My question is whether or not Africans in their native religions believe that God is acted upon or affected by what's going on in the universe. If something wrong happens in the world, does God suffer?

Samuel Erivwo: Does He suffer? I would say He is concerned about what happens in the world. He's concerned to set it right; beyond that, I won't say more.

E.M. Uka (Graduate Student, Drew University): The first speaker today (Warren Lewis) read a poem about Africa being bright, and as he said, unfortunately bright. When I listen to all this talk going on here today, I begin to wonder how this all relates to the actual situation in contemporary Africa! How does this address the situation in the Horn of Africa? The only contribution I feel that Africa is making is in terms of its generosities—cheap labor and the market it provides. All the tributes you have been listing for Africa do not appear to me to provide any means of relating my idea of God to what is actually happening. How does what you are talking about relate God to Africa's political and social realities?

Kamuti Kiteme: Man is like a plant, like a seed; the moment you uproot man from that earth where he is growing, you completely kill that man. You can deal with that dead man in any way you want. You (E.M. Uka) are asking us not to forget the political realities in Africa, not to forget the exploitation that African peoples have undergone as colonies or as slaves. We all agree with you, brother. What we are talking about is what these cultural roots are, from whence we were removed, leaving us in a cultural vacuum. Without roots we would be manipulated culturally, as we have for centuries, by others. Without roots we will never be able to stand on our own and either defend our minerals or defend our rights as human beings.

Samuel Erivwo: As my brother (Dr. Kiteme) just said, it is important that we know our roots. Once we know them, then we can address ourselves to the present situation. If we know that God is father of all, and mother of all, we can then begin to talk about brotherhood and sisterhood of all mankind; and if some people do not behave like brothers and sisters, then we can question them. There is no doubt that so much harm has been done to Africa from the 14th century to now. We have to face it.

William Jones: Could I just interject a point here? As a brother from the Diaspora, the issue I see being raised is this: it is one enterprise for us and you to articulate in a descriptive and accurate way the content of traditional African religion, but that is only part of the problem. I hear the gentleman raising the next question that immediately emerges. Given the content of traditional African religion, whatever it is, how does it square with the contemporary situation of Africa? If traditional African religion says that God is good, that God is just, how do you square that with the situation in South Africa? I think that's part of the question that is being raised. I resonate with your point as one who has attempted to raise similar questions from a different point of view. The question is in the back of the minds of many of us; our immediate concern is to focus on that first level of discussion, trying to articulate what contemporary African religion is.

Let us take two more questions.

Victor Wan-Tatah: I'd like to say something about the last comment and the response just made. The time has come when we can explore the liberative content of African religions. In the Yoruba myth of creation, Orisanla, when he was asked to execute God's work and run the errand for God, got drunk, and he couldn't accomplish it. So Oduduwa came over and supplanted him. Because of that, Oduduwa has taken over; not that he has replaced Orisanla, but he has been deified. People know that Orisanla is the deity, but Oduduwa is now the main person, the chief ancestor and more recognizable on the human level as the archetype of the Yoruba people. The folly of Orisanla shows that God is also one who, although he is potent in the sense that he does not do wrong, he is not all-powerful; sometimes he delegates his work to other people.

The moral, ethical demands of the babalowu ask them to be sympathetic to the people who are unable because of Orisanla's mistake. When he got drunk, he created some mistakes and that is the reason why you find people who are crippled. The one who is responsible for making man in the shape of man is also one who failed in executing his duties. Since the cripples and disabled are not responsible for their fate, Orisanla's worshippers and priests have consideration for those people. The disabled and crippled have a place in the whole concept of the worship of Olodumare, because it is not their fault.

Samuel Erivwo: Let me just point out that Orisanla is not the Supreme Being, Olodumare. Apart from that, you are in order. I want to endorse what the other gentleman (E.M. Uka) said; we are not unmindful of it. I'm preparing a paper which I hope to read in a conference on missiology in New York, in August, on "God and Man, the Doctrine of God in African Christian Theology." In that paper, the question of what to do in South Africa will surely be raised.

Ekwueme F. Okoli: The causal link between European domination of Africa and the destruction of indigenous African religions was the work of the missionaries. When the Europeans first came, they emphasized missionary work; and once you destroy the common basis of cohesion which religion provides, then you destroy the basis of that very community. African religion is the link, is the point of reference, for all societal activities. The disruption of traditional religion by a European translation of Christianity, in the way the Europeans brought it and attached it to economic imperialism, destroyed our own religious base. Once you have destroyed that connecting link between people, you set one against the other, you can dominate them. The best way to restore that primeval sense of belonging is to look through indigenous African religions to find out what is going on between us, to develop that sense of community, that sense of belonging. After Japan was destroyed during the war, the belief in the emperor and the worhip of the Sun God still united all of them. You always find a point where people go back to, to resurrect themselves as a community; and that is essentially in their religious beliefs. Unless we go back to religion, it will be very difficult for us to find a basis for community or an ideology that can hold all of us together.

William Jones: We will pause at this point for a coffee break.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION II

William Jones: For our final session today, the lecturer is Dr. Francis Botchway, Professor of International Law and Political Science and head of the Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Cincinnati. He received his B.A. degree from Columbia University in public law and government. He has also earned certificates in Russian, Eastern European and Chinese area studies. He received an M.A. and Ph.D. in International Law and Organization at the New School for Social Research. Dr. Botchway's title today will be the "Triadic Experience of African People, A Search for the Universal Synthesis."

The members of the panel for this session are Professor Dr. Deotis Roberts, Howard University. We have a new panelist, Professor Gladys Gray, who is at the Hofstra Community College of the City University of New York in the Department of African Studies. She received both her B.A. and M.A. from City University of New York, and is currently a doctoral student in their Ph.D. program in sociology. Father Primeaux we've already introduced, as well as Professor Gyekye.

Francis Botchway: Thank you very much, Bill (Jones). I have a difficult task this afternoon, having heard Dr. Roberts and Dr. Erivwo. It is difficult to follow in the footsteps of giants, but if we can stand on the shoulders of giants, I think we can look very far into the future. So, with the basis that you have provided, I will try to stand on your shoulders, and see if I can look into the future.

We all come from different tribes in Africa. I was once in Accra, having just arrived from the U.S., and was talking to a taxi-driver. He wanted to know which tribe I come from. I told him I am a Ghanaian, but I don't belong to any tribe. He said, "Are you really a Ghanaian?" I said, "Of course I am a Ghanaian." He said, "No, it's impossible; you couldn't possibly be a Ghanaian without belonging to a tribe." My tribe, I admit to you, is Ewe; and usually before we do anything, we pour libation to our ancestors, to our forebears. I'd like to read one prayer for pouring libations, as Dr. Erivwo did a little while ago, just to invoke the blessing of my forefathers, their protection and their guidance:

> Oh, ye fathers of the universe, who occupy the ontological state, we bring ye our offerings, ye are dawn, ye provide us with the mystical ties that bind us with the living dead, ye have not vanished out of existence, ye have entered into the state of collective immortality, we walk on the grave of our forefathers, the land providing us with the

> roots of existence, binding us mystically to our forefathers. Oh ye fathers of the universe, we will not disturb the ontological harmony. Grant us cosmic durability, grant us a state of personal immortality, externalize our collective immortality through the physical continuation of the family so that our children bear the traits of our forefathers. We offer thee communion, fellowship and remembrance.

I must try to deal with some of the issues that are disturbing the younger generation of Africans. Those of us who are not theologians, but who are social scientists, and who look at the totality of Africa and the role of Africa in the world political arena, we must concern ourselves with the problem of how to extricate ourselves from the dependence that forces us into a state of submission to the super powers.

I'll be drawing on works of Dr. Edward Blyden of Liberia, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Frantz Fanon, Senghor, Sekou Toure, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dr. Rohio and the rest. Essentially, I intend to look at three different trends of experience of the African, that is, the traditional African experience itself, the Euro-Christian experience, and the Islamic experience, to find out if it is possible, given these three different types of experiences, to develop a system of thought which would enable us to transform and alter our societies radically, and if so, what is going to be the nature of the emergent value system in Africa? Can we honestly talk about an authentic Islamized African, or an authentic Euro-Christianized African?

THE TRIADIC EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN PEOPLE A SEARCH FOR THE UNIVERSAL SYNTHESIS

Dr. Francis Botchway

For the traditional African coming into contact with Christianity, the Bible seems to be full of contradictions. If he comes into contact with Islam or Judaism, the laws of the Qur'an and the Torah seem too arbitrary. Like Benedict Spinoza, the traditional African believes that nature and God were one; and that knowledge of nature was therefore knowledge of God. By understanding the cosmology of traditional Africans, of their holistic view of the universe, we can then understand why, for traditional Africans, their socio-cultural and political institutions and the web of social and natural kinship are said to be in a state of systemic equilibrium, while the intrusions of Euro-Christian values brought about systemic disequilibrium.

The traditional African's historic and metaphysical encounter with himself and with Euro-Christian and Islamic civilizations, his soundless dialogue with himself trying to understand his *triadic* existence, his search for a primordial existence projected into the future as "civilization" is not only a metatheoretical conceptualization in the abstract but also a sophisticated quality of introspective imagination.

What, then, is the African's *triadic* experience of civilization that foreshadows that level of historical knowledge, that new historical affirmation, and that universal synthesis? For the African this is not mere abstraction. This search for the universal, this prospective trend in political and social theory, this evolutionary thrust into the future is also related, dialectically, to a retrospective concern with a more permanent definition of man and of the realization of man's needs in an equilibriated social system. This search for the universal synthesis is really a return to the past in order to develop a more meaningful future. Senghor, Nkrumah, Fanon and Nyerere have all devoted most of their energies to the retrospective search for the means of attaining a more humane society; they have all addressed themselves to the role of human volition in the formation and acceptance of new political institutions in Africa. But despite their concern with the traditional African past, they have not postulated a return to any historically specific "state of nature" in the African past. Such a return, they have all argued, is not worthy of the ingenuitv of the modern African. Like Rousseau, they all believe in the "perfectibility" of man and in the possibility and necessity of progress. They also believe in the theoretical-instrumental unity of thought and action.

What, then, is the African's *triadic* experience? It is 1) traditional African experience and values; 2) Euro-Christian experience and values; and 3) Islamic experience and values.

Traditional African Experience and Values

The idea of Africa is as old as civilization because civilization itself first began in Africa. *Homo Erectus Africanus,* compelled by the circumstances of his existence, made it a point to understand and master his environment. In his efforts, he generated systematically the vision of civilization itself. Writing in 1954, Richard Wright in his *Black Power* paid a glowing tribute "to the Unknown African who, because of his primal and poetic humanity, was regarded by white men as a 'thing' to be bought, sold, and used as an instrument of production; and who, alone in the forests of West

Africa, created a vision of life so simple as to be terrifying, yet a vision that was irreducibly human. . ." In seeking to understand his universe, he also sought an understanding of his own actual and potential experiences, a task which did not only require conceptualization in the abstract, but also introspective imagination. Nothing was alien to him. He was a thinker and an intellectual who combined the *bios-theoreticus* with the *bios-practicus.* He was holistic. The universe was his laboratory. His history, though denied, is still the authentic history of mankind. The ensemble of his experiences in the words of Stanley Diamond, "constitute the only authentic definition of history." The African was simultaneously *homo economicus, homo religiosus,* and *homo politicus.* He stood at the center of a synthetic, holistic universe of concrete and abstract activities, interested in the causal nexus between the *bios-theoreticus* and the *bios-practicus.*

Traditional political scientists tend to emphasize formal structures and institutions. In the opinion of the great majority of modern-day political scientists, cosmology does not properly belong to the realm of political science. They argue that politics should stay clear of questions of ontology, epistemology, and cosmology—and that politics should confine itself to an objective and scientific analysis of the authoritative allocation of values. I am not so convinced. I consider myself more of a social theorist than a political scientist. Political science has interested me primarily as a science dealing with the totality of the social system, of human experience, and its astonishing capabilities to elucidate the problem of large-scale historico-philosophical consciousness.

In political science today, "value-free" inquiry and mathematical equations have become the prime constituents and the proper "scientific" representation of social reality. There is no place within this scientific paradigm for the analysis of nonquantifiable social values, the particles of nature, or for those ineluctable intrasystemic forces for which no mathematical equations or measurement can be found. Those elements of social valuation and the normative aspects of society that are central and intrinsic to the processes of societal transformation are excluded from the concerns of the present-day political scientist.

What is needed as a corrective in political science is a new paradigm that will permit the broadening of a political science in the true Aristotelian sense. It is in this spirit that I look at African cosmological ideas with reference to traditional African values and experience.

The structure of African cosmology is shaped by an essential belief in an *ontological equilibrium.*[1] Within this cosmic equilibrium one perceives the real and the unreal, the positive and the negative, hope and despair, absence becoming presence, and the humanistic vision of life here on earth.

In African cosmology there are no specific theoretic formulations of the nature of the social universe; but a social universe, with its own motor force, uncontrollable by man, has no basis in traditional African thought.

Cosmic forces in the social universe are in fact controllable by man for his own benefit. Since the natural order is of interest and importance to man, and since man can manipulate the natural order for the benefit of the social universe, African cosmology rejects the proposition that there is a world order unrelated to man's activities and desires. Cosmologically, therefore, the traditional African believes that the order of nature is a controlled one and that the forces of nature can be manipulated through properties intrinsic in various objects found in nature—animate and inanimate.

Man being a social animal, his relationships with other men in the social universe are important in determining and shaping his destiny. The traditional African, using social equilibrium as the main motor force of the social universe, was able to evolve a sophisticated social system which placed the emphasis on "fairness and moderation, wisdom and the ability to get on with others, generosity and helpfulness, not merely among his kin, but in the wider circle of his friends and neighbors."[2] One may hazard the guess that the traditional African was on his way to concretizing his cosmology and developing a paradigm that would account for those elements of social valuation and normative aspects of society that are central and intrinsic to an understanding of the worldview of the African, but that Euro-Christian and Islamic culture contacts arrested this development. One is not therefore surprised at the ignorance displayed by Arnold Toynbee, when he wrote that, "the black races alone have not contributed positively to any civilization" or the historical fallacy of Trevor-Roper, when he noted that the African past comprised, "only the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes." Such is the ignorance of some of the learned men of Europe.

One final point of interest. This concerns the phenomenon of time. As most Africanists are aware, Mbiti has argued that for the African, "time is simply a composition of events which have occurred, those which are taking place now and those which are immediately to occur. What has not taken place or what has no likelihood of an immediate occurrence falls in the category of 'no time.' What is certain to occur, or what falls within the rhythm of natural phenomena, is in the category of inevitable or potential time."[3]

Mbiti's view of "the African concept of time" is controverted by Dr. Kwame Gyekye, who has rejected the thesis that "the African concept of time" is the key to our understanding of the basic religious and philosophical concepts of African peoples. Dr. Gyekye postulates that "the African concept of time which for Mbiti is essentially two-dimensional—can *not* be the key or the basic category in the African religious and philosophical orientation. . . .Time, *qua* a metaphysical category, is certainly a fundamental concept, but this does not warrant its being made the key to such other metaphysical concepts as cause, mind, substance etc. . . .There is also no philosophical justification for making it (time) more significant than other metaphysical categories."[4]

This time orientation in the cosmology of the African, governed as it were by its multi-dimensionality, is not a pre-condition for an understanding of African religiosity or of the political and social institutions of traditional Africans. African historico-philosophical consciousness moves beyond history. For the traditional African, the "whole of mankind is a vast representation of the Deity."[5] The traditional African was a humanist, he was holistic, and in communion with nature, he developed his practical wisdom and genius; and in his understanding of the forces of nature and of God he evolved a cosmic religion which in itself was total. Since for the African there is a holistic understanding of the universe of man, with his unique historical experiences, he is better able to embark on a search for the synthesis of the universal. And given the religiosity of the African, and his simple but powerful vision, his fundamental sympathetic harmony, I dare to advance the suggestion that "there is no people in whom the religious instinct is deeper and more universal than among Africans."[6] Africa, Dr. Blyden postulated:

> May yet prove to be the spiritual conservatory of the world. . . when the civilized nations, in consequence of their wonderful material development, shall have had their spiritual perceptions darkened and their spiritual susceptibilities blunted through the agency of a cap-

> tivating and absorbing materialism, it may be that they may have to resort to Africa to recover some of the simple elements of faith.[7]

The Euro-Christian and Islamic Experiences and Values

"The universalism of Christianity," Stanley Diamond has argued, "is no more than a symptom of the imperial control by Western civilization of the cultural space of other peoples." African religions "whose symbolic formulations rise from and are in touch with the whole of human existence...express a more authentic religious consciousness than has been evident in churchly dogma. . . ." "Institutionalized Christianity," Diamond avers, "is therefore an aspect of modern imperialism."[8] Institutionalized Christianity, as we are all aware, took on the character of an agent of slavery, racism and colonialism. Christianity is incompetent to maintain the simplicity of the Nazarene and disseminate his teachings.

Fascinated by Islamic values, Dr. Blyden, one of Africa's celebrated intellectuals, felt that Islam was more attuned to the idiosyncrasies, the peculiar gifts, and the genius of Africans than Christianity. Attracted by the sobriety, independence, intellectual curiosity and openmindedness of Islam, Blyden saw in Islam a completely different philosophy which stressed tolerance and human dignity, and abnegated prejudice and racial discrimination.[9] "Islam," he pointed out, "extinguishes all distinctions founded upon race, colour or nationality...the religion of Islam furnishes the greatest solace and the greatest defence." Blyden's quarrel with Christianity was that, unlike Islam, it allowed the idea of the universal brotherhood of man to be corrupted and to degenerate into the abysmal doctrines of racial superiority and slavery. Islam, on the other hand, was closer to the basic principles of the idea of the universal brotherhood of man than Christianity. Islam, he argued, "is the form of Christianity best adapted to the Negro race. . . ."[10] He further argued that "Islam has done for vast tribes of Africa what Christianity in the hands of Europeans has not yet done. It has cast out the demons of fetishism, drunkenness, and gambling, and has introduced customs which subserve for the people the highest purposes of growth and preservation. I do not believe," he concluded, "that a system which has done such things can be outside of God's beneficent plans for the evolution of mankind."[11]

However negative Euro-Christian values may have been, the African has imbibed them. They are now part of his value system and his frame of reference. Having imbibed both Islamic and

Christian values, can we talk of the authentic African, and can we evolve a post-independence, socio-political value system independent of the Islamic and Euro-Christian values and experiences?

The *triadic* experience of the African involves traditional African experience, Islamic experience and Euro-Christian experience. As Nkrumah has observed, "When one society meets another, the observed historical trend is that acculturation results in a balance of forward movement, a movement in which each society assimilates certain useful attributes of the other."[12] Traditional African society has already met with Islamic and Euro-Christian civilizations, and there is no longer any such thing as an authentic traditional African society. It must, however, be pointed out that though we cannot speak of an authentic traditional African, the insights and postulates of traditional African society have not vanished from the consciousness of Africans; they have become part of the universal inheritance of the African.

Returning now to the *triadic* experience of the African, Nkrumah, in search of an ideology which will unite the traditional African experience with the Islamic and Euro-Christian experiences, argued that:

> Islamic civilization and European colonialism are both historical experiences of the traditional African society; profound experiences that have permanently changed the complexion of the traditional African society. They have introduced new values and a new social, cultural, and economic organization into African life. Modern African societies are not traditional, even if backward, and they are clearly in a state of socio-economic disequilibrium. They are in this state because they are not anchored to a steady ideology.[13]

The way out for the modern African is not to engage in a "futile attempt to recreate a past that cannot be resurrected." The only choice left is to move forward to a "higher reconciled form of society in which the quintessence of the human purposes of traditional African society reasserts itself in a modern context."[14] The inevitability of a progressive forward march must be felt by all Africans, and in this process, the refashioned African society must have as its base the African idea of the original value of man which "stands refreshingly opposed to the Christian idea of the original sin and degradation of man,"[15] and must accommodate the "positive contribution" of Euro-Christian and Islamic civilizations.

The synthesizing process must be undertaken by the present generation of African scholars. Confronted by this *triadic* experience, they must develop a philosophical frame of reference which will make possible the theoretic basis for an ideology whose substance shall contain these three strands of experience. "What is called for as a first step," Nkrumah pointed out, "is a body of connected thought which will determine the general nature of our action in unifying the society which we have inherited, this unification to take account, at all times, of the elevated ideas underlying the traditional African society."[16] Africa's future, therefore, lies in a synthesis of the *triadic* experience of the African and not in a return to traditional African society. The ultimate synthesis of this *triadic* experience is an even greater imperative, for it will point beyond Africa and indeed beyond history. This will be Africa's contribution to the modern world. This will be the new historical affirmation.

Notes

[1] See F. A. Botchway, *The Genius of Africa: Masters of African Social and Political Thought,* 1975 (unpublished), p. 243.

[2] See Daryll Forde, ed., *African Worlds,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 80.

[3] See J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy,* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1969), p. 17.

[4] See Kwame Gyekye, "African Religions and Philosophy: A Review Article," *Second Order,* Vol. IV, No. 1, January, 1975, pp. 86-94.

[5] See E. W. Blyden, *The African Problem and the Method of Its Solution,* (Washington, D.C.: Gibson Bros., 1890), pp. 22-23.

[6] See E. W. Blyden, *The Prospects of Africa,* (London: Imray and Doulton, 1874), p. 7.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] See Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization,* (New Brunswick, N.J.: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1974), p. 31.

[9] See F. A. Botchway, *The Genius of Africa, op. cit.,* p. 67.

[10] See E. W. Blyden, *The Lagos Weekly Record,* Dec. 3, 1892.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] See Kwame Nkrumah, "African Socialism Revisited," *African Forum,* Vol. 1, No. 3, Winter, 1966, p. 7.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] See Kwame Nkrumah, *Conscientism,* (London: Heineman, 1964), p. 68.

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 70.

Discussion

J. Deotis Roberts: I'll begin by making a comment as a theologian. One question among theologians is whether or not the concept of indigenization is adequate to the development of a distinctive African thrust in theology, including the political dimensions you're concerned about. The essential agreement among third-world thinkers has been that "contextualization" says a great deal more, because it includes a search for the traditional background in the culture plus an awareness that one has to move creatively and dynamically into a new future. Contextualization theology means getting the background well in hand, keeping in mind the responsibilities and demands that must be met in that particular setting for the present and future as well, thus to be able to define one's own destiny without having someone from a different culture define that destiny for you. Indigenization theology seems to be enthusiastically pursued by Western missionary theologians in Africa simply because they are willing to affirm much of the past of Africa without the thrust of liberation in terms of the political and economic concerns which have been brought here today. In Latin America there was an outright rejection by liberation theologians of the concept of "development," because it was being imposed on them by Western imperial thinkers, both political and theological, who were talking about development. The Latin Americans said, "No, what we want is liberation," and that means liberation from oppression imposed upon them by the upper class in their own societies as well as the domination of multinational corporations and political movements from outside.

I solidly affirm the concern for cutting the dependency cord with Europe. But, I wonder if the attitude toward Islam is not a little romantic. I know in the early stages of the Black movement, my students at Howard were very enthusiastic about Islam. They understood that Islam was always non-racist in its policies, until they discovered from their reading of history that the Muslims were also involved in slavery and slave traffic. Recently, Eldridge Cleaver has come back from North Africa telling us that the present record of Islam is not so good on the social front. I think we ought to have a realistic approach to Islam as well as a realistic approach to the Western imposition of Christian values on Africa. There are arguments for and against the role of Islam, but it can be romanticized. I also feel it is very easy to take a position against Christianity. I am certainly no champion for the way in which some missionaries have used it or the way it has gone hand-in-hand with imperialism. But sometimes we speak of Christianity in too general a way. There is a robust humanism in Christianity, one of the representatives of which is Bill Jones. It can be dynamic, progressive and very alert on the moral front; and I certainly espouse that position.

I think, finally, we need to look at values. If we have the same values as those from whom we would like to free ourselves, then we are likely to make certain compromises about what is really valuable or important in our own culture. An example here at home would be the recent changes in the programs of the Black Muslims, who are trying to buy into capitalism and upward mobility. What makes them distinctive, the kinds of things they've done—reclaiming prisoners, rebuilding strong families—were somehow so closely associated with the value system that operated, economically speaking, outside the larger society, that eventually they copped out of this. They have begun to buy into the mainstream and therefore surrender their powerful thrust for liberation. It is important for Africans to find values which do not make them completely subject to capitulation; only by doing this, from my point of view, can you really cut the dependency relationship with Europe.

Francis Botchway: I think the major problem is that in most of the African states there is no value system which defines the nature of the socio-political institutions which are going to emerge. Consequently, we are always in a state of economic limbo. At times we are capitalists; at times we are socialists, depending on the whims of the person in power at the given moment. What we need is a system of thought which permeates the totality of society, so that, regardless of who comes to power, there's always a structure, always a system which would determine new directions according to the various expectations of our society. In the absence of that, what we have is nothing but a changing of the guards; and the more you change these guards, the less anything fundamental happens to the system.

Dr. Blyden, especially when he looks at the concept of the universal brotherhood of man, sees Islam being more able than Euro-Christianity to implant itself and become totally and completely enmeshed in the values, the way of life, the behavior of the African people. Christianity looks down on Africans; to the African, that in itself is the defeat of the fundamental nature of the brotherhood of man. That is why Blyden argues that Islam is the Christianity which the Negro race needs; if you preach the universal brotherhood of man, but go to Africa and put yourself on a plane of superiority, then the African knows you are not really practicing what the basic tenets of your religion stand for. While I agree with you that Islam is also involved in slavery—Muslims came from the northern part of Africa, invaded the Ghana empire, Mali, Songhai, and destroyed African civilizations—still, that does not deny the fact that within Islam, on the other hand, the fundamental principle of the universal brotherhood of man is upheld. Once you are a Muslim, whether you are African, European, or Arab, you are held on the plane of equality before all other Muslims.

Kwame Gyekye: In terms of doctrine, one could say that both Christianity and Islam espouse universal brotherhood; but, I think Blyden, in his own experience, really saw that Muslims were much more able to interact with other people than were European Christians. In Islam, for instance, during the Hegira, Africans and Indians, people from Japan, Europe, America, all gather together at the Kaaba in Mecca. There is, in fact, no discrimination whatsoever between peoples, between races; we are all one. In practice, Islamic peoples take this idea much more seriously, more realistically than European Christians. There are so many cases of Africans coming to America and going to church and being told that they cannot enter this church; the African students here can testify to this, but you'll never find this in the Islamic world.

Gladys Gray: My field is primarily sociology, and I look at religion primarily from a sociological perspective. So I see the Euro-Christian perspective of Christianity as basically detrimental to the overall structure of what we term brotherhood. The Euro-Christian tends to dismantle brotherhood to a large degree. We find that when they talk about brotherhood, they're talking about brotherhoods at different levels, as opposed to all-encompassing brotherhood. Within this Euro-Christian concept, there is a continuous perpetuation of hierarchy; and, as was mentioned earlier today, tribalism and denominationalism tend to be part and parcel of the same package. In terms of denominationalism, if you're not a member of a given denomination, you are not a brother. The concept of God you are perpetuating tends to become hidden, and you become more involved in the denomination; brotherhood is shunted into the corner. Thus, I see Euro-Christian religion as detrimental to the overall concept of universal brotherhood. I'm not Islamic; I have not done Islamic studies; but, from what I have gathered, Islam seems to be more practical, as far as the Black and brotherhood are concerned, than Christianity in the Euro-Christian perspective has been.

Patrick Primeaux: Dr. Botchway, what do you think the role or the attitude of Euro-Christian, of American-Christian religion, of Roman Catholicism, the Unification Church, or any of the Reformed traditions should be towards Africa, especially when we identify ourselves as having a mandate explicitly to proselytize, to convert people, to bring people towards a realization of the truth which we believe to be Christianity?

Francis Botchway: I think it's very simple. All churches have to do is actualize what they preach. That's all. Once that is transferred into action, you solve the problems of the world. (applause)

J. Deotis Roberts: My record is clearly for liberation, and I would not be operating out of Christian beliefs with that purpose in mind unless I thought that a prophetic message is inherent in the Gospel, which has not been taken seriously. Christianity has a social gospel to proclaim which equals that to be found in other religions, including Islam. We have to make the distinction, as our speaker said, between Christianity itself and a Europeanized version of Christianity. Certainly, I have made the distinction clearly in my mind between Christianity and "white-ianity."

One of the problems with the impact of Christianity on Africa has been the fact of racism. Christianity has transported racism not only to Africa but also everywhere else I have been in the world by white American Christians. What the liberation theologians are attacking should not be limited to racism. In some Islamic countries where I have been, the gap between the rich and the poor—the class problem—is a form of inhumanity, just as the race problem is. Sometimes the two things come together, as in our own experience: when you're Black, you're poor. Both converge. Whereas Islam admittedly has a much better record in the Third World on the race question, perhaps it needs to look very carefully at the class problem. Some of our Muslim friends who come from Saudi Arabia and Egypt will agree with me that the distinction between classes—people who are super rich and people who are wallowing in poverty and hunger—is something that Islam has not done as good a job with as it could. So, I think it's not a matter of one over against the other, but rather a matter of cleaning up both, and seeing what can be done in the area of making life more human. This is the way I would like us to work together as brothers.

Kwame Gyekye: About three months ago in a class with my students, we were discussing African social structure. We got to talking about marriage, and one of the women said, when she gets married, she would not like to be called "Mrs." She would not take on her husband's name. She is going to go by her own maiden name. I realized that quite a few women professors at the University of Florida, where I'm teaching, have refused to take on the names of their husbands. In Africa, right now, when African women get married, they take on the names of their husbands; they like to call themselves "Mrs. X" or "Mrs. Y." But before, there was no such thing. My mother never took on the name of my father. Now, the interesting thing is that in time, I'm sure, this is going to spread to Africa. If American women are no longer taking on the names of their husbands, it won't be too long until African women begin to refuse to take on the names of their husbands. In other words, they are going to go back to what our mothers and grandmothers used to do. We have our value systems, but when others bring in their own, we just shovel aside our own value systems, and accept others; and then, when they change and go back to something else, we also go the same way.

A book just came out last fall by a professor at the Harvard Business School, George C. Lodge, *The New American Ideology.* He tries to show that in American society and, in fact, in the whole of Western Europe, the original ideological framework within which the Western system has operated, is gradually giving way to an entirely new framework. For instance, he talks about how the Lockean insistence on private property and limited state participation in society are changing, and how, in fact, individualism is gradually giving way almost unconsciously to communitarianism. He has a whole chapter on what he calls "communitarianism." As I read through the book, I came to the conclusion there is a great deal in African traditional cultures and our value systems which, in fact, parallels the ultimate result of the changes I imagine to be occurring in American society.

Francis Botchway has done a good job. We can all see the certain need for the creation of indigenous political institutions in Africa. Why is democracy not working in Africa? Many critics, usually Europeans, criticize Africans for being unable to rule themselves. We just can't establish and uphold constitutions, they say. You can read it in practically any newspaper.

But let me say this: traditionally, we did have elements of democracy in African institutions. Read the book by R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution.* Rattray was an anthropologist in the employ of the colonial administration in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in the early decades of this century. Ashantis are one of the major ethnic groups of the Akan tribe in Ghana. It seemed to Rattray that the Akans were practicing democracy in a way superior to the way it was practiced in Western society. Whereas in his own country after elections, the people loved to sit back and let the members of parliament rule, he said this is never the case in the Ashanti society he was describing. Democracy is seen in every part of the people's life, and every day.

Let me give you a short phenomenology of traditional constitutional government, say, in the Ashanti area, which, I think, can be fairly safely generalized to apply to other societies in Africa. There is the chief; and the chief has a council. The chief is elected, and the chief can be deposed. There is opposition within the council when a meeting is held; all the people of the village or town assemble, including the women, and attend. British women never had a vote until 1928! As far back as the 18th-19th century, our women were attending meetings with the men in the palace of our chief, discussing all the important issues, including war and other matters. There was political opposition; everybody was allowed to express his or her views.

In San Francisco last November in a committee at the Sixth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, which Francis and I attended, it was said there is no word for "opposition" in any African language. One person said that if the word does not occur, then why impose a system whereby one party of government is the opposition to the other parties? Why superimpose this kind of system on African peoples who do not know about political opposition? Political opposition has always existed. The present proponents of the union, or national government, in Ghana are not intending to exclude the opposition from the deliberations. That would be impossible, since human beings are so different. What the proponents of union government are afraid of and actually are trying to prevent is ripples of opposition sent down the national-political landscape, bringing about divisions and vendettas, strife and quarrels, and street fights, in their wake. This has really been our experience in the past twenty years of our political life. Opposition there will be, because traditionally there was opposition. But whereas we are a people whom tradition has united together, living together in communal structures, as brothers, this parliamentarian system, coming from outside, is now about to destroy us.

If the British rulers really had had the interest of the Africans at heart, as they did their own extraction of mineral resources and the fleecing of the resources of the country, they would have nurtured the original institutions. Democracy is a concept that has been expressed, exemplified and substantiated in different ways in different Western countries. Certainly the way democracy is expressed in American society is different from the way democracy has been institutionally expressed in Britain, France or Germany. But, it's still democracy; or at least we call it so. What is important for us is to establish institutions that we can operate, institutions that we can work out; it's not necessary for us to import the institutions of Britain. It wasn't necessary for the colonialists to import their own institutions for the Africans. They should have allowed for the development and evolution of our traditional democratic ways of ruling ourselves. This is one of the reasons many things do not seem to work right in Africa; we are operating foreign institutions! That's how I see the political malaise that Africa has been experiencing in the past twenty years. It's high time African scholars of all disciplines began to study our own value systems, our own institutions. Plato said that unless societies are ruled by philosophers, or unless our people are imbued with philosophy, there will be no deliverance for our cities. Now I say that until we operate our institutions, or until we evolve our own institutions and operate them ourselves, until we create them ourselves, make our own changes, correct our own mistakes, trim them and prune them; until we get to the place where we can realize that our own institutions are OK, the European critics will still be unable to see what they call democracy in Africa.

Francis Botchway: To add to what Kwame has just said, (we are both from Ghana), my problem with the African elite, the African intellectual, is that he is very comfortable with Europe. When it comes to European institutions, the European parliamentary system of government, the American presidential system, the French Assembly system, the African intellectual is comfortable. But the moment you ask him to develop something which is uniquely African, which comes out of his own experiences, then you have problems. Let me illustrate this. Kwame would remember—we were very young at the time; I guess we were undergraduates—when Nkrumah wanted to set up an Institute of African Studies in the University of Ghana. Here is Ghana, an independent African state, and the government wanted an Institute of African Studies within the University of Ghana. Who were the ones opposed to the idea of the institute? The African intellectuals, of course! The African faculty members! Chancellor O'Brien, the Irish Vice-Chancellor of the University, would be the one to insist on the establishment of African Studies; and Nkrumah told them that if they didn't want it, he will impose it. These same African scholars go to the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies to get their doctorates. But when it comes to establishing their own institution for the study of their own values, they said, "No, you're going to lower the standard. Everything made in U.S.A. or England is good; but if it's made in Nigeria or Ghana, it's bad."

William Jones: We have time for questions from the audience.

Unidentified Speaker: Let me say that I agree wholeheartedly with Dr. Botchway's proposal. In order to have effective institutions in African society, we need to take into account each of the three, the traditional African experience, the Christian experience, and also the Islamic experience. What is your feeling with respect to not just limiting ourselves to our histories, but rather, as Dr. Roberts said in his book, *A Black Political Theology,* taking a holistic view of all of the experiences from which we might be able to benefit? Should we not try to develop new ideas, new value systems, new thought processes, new revelations, that have not been proposed rather than just proceeding with those three?

Francis Botchway: Let me speak as a political scientist. Institutions, values, and norms (what we call the authoritative allocation of values), those who make the decisions in society, and institutions which emerge in terms of the fundamental law of the land, including the constitution, all these are nothing but the concrete historical experiences of the people concretized in a legalized form. If you want to develop a viable institution for your people, but you take values, norms, ideas which your people have not experienced, you cannot concretize them into a document and call it a fundamental law of the land, because, in essence, what would be happening is the imposition of a norm which is alien to the people. But if you are able to determine within the people's historical experiences those norms that are trans-historical, universal, in Euro-Christian, Islamic, and traditional African values, and that cut across each set of experiences, then you are in better position to concretize their experiences and translate these experiences into documents and institutions which they then can refer to as their own constitution, the fundamental law of their land. For the next hundred years, you can always go back to that basic constitution, which really is an expression of the evolution of the totality of our experience. We don't have that in Africa, and that's the problem.

Unidentified Speaker: We know that new situations we have not experienced before require us to develop new approaches. For example, the multi-national power and influence of the multinational corporation is a relatively new development. How we effectively deal with that may not be determined totally from the three traditional courses you mentioned. I'm just pushing to find out how you feel about new needs in new situations that have not been dealt with before. Is our creativity stifled?

Francis Botchway: No, it's not stifled. I think the beauty of the constitution is the elastic nature of the constitution, so that when new experiences impinge on you, your constitution is sufficiently elastic to accommodate these new experiences and you continually grow. When it comes to the multi-national, trans-national corporations, they are not multi-national; they are not owned by different states; they are trans-national corporations, not accountable to anyone, not even to the U.S. government. The only solution to this difficult problem is for the African states to come together and unite. Look at what went on in Zaire about a week ago, in the Shaba province area. In 1960, when the Congo became independent, Patrice Lumumba was the Prime Minister; Moise Tshombe led a movement in Katanga, to secede from the Congo because Patrice Lumumba had declared himself a socialist. In that section of the Congo, there are strategic mineral resources which the Western powers need. The Belgian government, France, Germany, Britain and the United States supported Moise Tshombe with financial and military assistance to break away from the legitimate government of the Congo. They supported the gendarmes in the Katanga province. Eventually, Mobutu would assassinate Lumumba and declare himself pro-Western; the Western powers then shifted and supported General Mobutu against Moise Tshombe, because now they had a man in power who is military and pro-Western. Tshombe would be arrested in Spain, flown to Algeria, and die in a prison there. The same people in the Shaba province supported by the West against Lumumba were also supported by the West against the MPLA in Angola. The Westerners fought with the Portuguese against the MPLA. They fought with the South Africans against the MPLA. The Western powers supported the same people against the MPLA who invited the Cubans to come in. The MPLA won, and the rebels, who found themselves in the Shaba province being pushed out of the Congo into Angola, had to enter into a rapprochement with the MPLA; so, the MPLA gave them a base, and they are now operating against the legitimate government of the Congo. This is a very complicated situation. Once the Katangese were being supported by the West, now they are being supported by

Angola, Cuba, and the Soviet Union. So you really can't say, let us take this position, or that position; because, in politics there are no permanent friends. The only way out is for the African states themselves to come together and forge some sort of union. Without that, the trans-national corporations will continue to deplete Africa of its resources; and as the resources of Africa are depleted, Africa will become more dependent on the West. And when that happens, God knows.

Unidentified Speaker: Dr. Roberts, you alluded to the Christian religion and also mentioned the Muslim religion. I would rather talk about religion and academic principles of it as it applies to us rather than the people who are responsible for carrying out the principles of religion. We're talking about God, who is not in the church or religion and is not in the hearts of men. To me, the question is whether or not man is capable of carrying out the principles of true Christianity or true Muslimism, whatever they might be.

J. Deotis Roberts: That's a very involved theological question. Built into the Christian understanding of man is the belief there is an estrangement between man and God—the old-fashioned word, sin; and, that has incapacitated man on his own to fulfill all of the requirements of the Christian religion. One of the unfortunate things that happened in slavery was this splitting of the gospel in such ways that a man could be thought to be spiritually free and still be in physical chains. But there is also a doctrine of grace—divine aid—also a part of Christian faith, which indicates response and responsibility on the part of man.

Burton Leavitt (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): Dr. Botchway, what do you foresee as the future of Africa in terms of communism and Christianity or democracy?

Francis Botchway: I don't think anyone should even worry about communism in Africa. I haven't heard any African leader say he's a communist; they are socialists, and being a socialist does not negate religion. Unless you're talking about the educated African living in the urban enclave who has, to some extent, been de-traditionalized and who looks more towards the West, maybe that de-traditionalized African might be able to accept communism as a doctrine, as a system of thought, but the majority of Africans would have problems with communism. Communism is a worry more of the cold warriors in the West, who are not really interested in Africa developing its own system of thought independent of that which we know in the West. George Padmore wrote a book in 1956, *Pan*

Africanism or Communism? But I think the common struggle in Africa is not going to be between communism and Pan Africanism. I think it is going to be between either Pan Africanism or the evolution of African norms versus European norms and values. Communist Marxism, because it is European, must be excluded by the African along with other alien ideologies. The very nature of the African—his religiousness in itself—is a negation of communism.

Patrick Primeaux: I want to come back to this question of the Africanization of Christianity. The African continent cannot be isolated from the rest of the world; therefore, it seems to me that the Judeo-Christian tradition is going to continue to live with us. As you pointed out, there are quite a number of elements of traditional Christian religion which parallel African traditional religion. How do we sort out the common and universal from the particular and denominational?

Francis Botchway: The problems we face are extremely difficult . Perhaps the only exception is Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, who is making a serious effort to develop something really new and different from that which we inherited from Britain or France or Belgium or Portugal or Germany. When it comes to the Francophone and Anglophone African societies, there is this very fundamental love affair with the totality of Europeanized institutions. We will find it to be uncomfortable to sit down and even to begin the synthesizing process we are proposing.

Kwame (Gyekye) would bear witness to this: it is very hard for us to convene this type of conference in Africa in an African university setting, where people who are *supposed* to be doing this sort of thing are themselves comfortable with that which they already have, a caricatured form of European institutions. They are not European, they are not African—they are in symbiosis. I think it's worse for us as human beings to live in symbiosis, because we have no roots. What would it be like to look into all of the experiences we inherit, and then say to ourselves, "Let us develop something which we will call our own." We have been influenced by Euro-Christianity; there's nothing we can do about that. I am personally Westernized in everything. When I go home, I can't live the way my folks do back in the village; so, I can't really argue for African authenticity. I can't, and I won't; because I know for sure I won't be able to live that kind of life. I'm searching for that synthesis which contains within the traditional African experience, the Euro-Christian experience and the Islamic experience, because all the sectors of African societies have an influence, and we can't do without them.

Shawn Byrne (Organizer, National Council of Church and Social Action): I want to make a couple of schoolmaster points. Father Primeaux, I think your question was, what should the attitude of Christians be in this situation. But you cast it in denominational terms—in terms of Catholics and Protestants. We should ask what is the *Christian* response, or better, what is the response of man before God to this situation? We have to think ourselves free of denominationalism.

You mentioned the difficulties involved when we are sent to proselytize and convert; but, I do not understand it that way. We are sent to proclaim the gospel; as I understand it, proclamation of the gospel is something like the ringing of the bell of freedom—that humans can become the son or the daughter of God. It is not seeking to convert someone to *my way.* Because the whole purpose of the intervention of God in history in the person of Christ was that man would reach the level of Christ. If we were to think that way, it would become possible.

What should the attitude of Christians or Europeans be in this African situation? It may only be one of unconditional service. I tried to say earlier that Europeans have gone to Africa saying: "We are your servants, but on our terms." But the only valid attitude, I believe as a Christian, is one of totally unconditional service. Such a person must be prepared to take the servant's position; he must be prepared to clean the boots, and to shovel the dung, figuratively or literally speaking; he must be prepared to take the very lowest level.

Dr. Botchway, I find your speech very, very stimulating. The realism of it challenges me. I was glad that you said for yourself that you have been Westernized, because I was going to say it for you. (Laughter) You made the point that you have been seeking a synthesis for which scholars are needed to get together. I would agree on the scholars, but let me suggest that people of intuition not be excluded, people who are perhaps not highly trained, but who have perception, intuition—poets, artists. These people can perhaps arrive at the synthesis in a germinal way before the scholars. Since this is all in the context of the Global Congress of World Religions, I would suggest, if I may, to Dr. Lewis and others who are interested in the Congress, that artists and poets be included.

Francis Botchway: Amendment accepted in favor of artists and writers and poets. Intuitive people are the intellectuals, not the scholars.

Patrick Primeaux: Shawn (Byrne), the distinction you are making is an interesting and important one. But the way we think and the way we even define service will depend to a great extent on each person's denominational perspective. Your question has contributed to our discussion today by pointing to the fact that even within Christianity, as with peoples of indigenous religions in Africa, there are "denominational" differences that are very significant. It would be a bit naive to think otherwise. There is, in a sense, a universal gospel which applies to all Christians; but, the manner in which it is interpreted by a Roman Catholic or an Orthodox or a Southern Baptist is quite different.

William Jones: I'm getting the signal that it's time to eat. Warren, do you want to say anything and move us towards the table?

Warren Lewis: As a church historian, I see how religious principles have been mishandled by the people for 2000 and more years. As long as we can talk about principles, it feels pretty good; but, when somebody starts examining our track record, we're not so comfortable. The Muslims, as well as the Christians, have to admit it. Whether the reason for it is "sin," as brother Roberts said (and certainly that is what I, too, would say) or existential nausea, or the fear of death, or whatever your word for original sinfulness is, we all struggle with it. What that tells me, in the context of planning a Global Congress of World Religions, is that instead of remaining defensive about the failures of our previous religious tradition, whether we were Baptist or Church of Christ, Bahai, or Muslim, or Catholic—whatever tribe we come from, let's stop the tribal warfare. We are saying in our proposal for the Global Congress that the time has come to define a new reality: to take the matter into our own hands under the grace of the High God, in whom we here have all affirmed our faith, and to affirm in global congress, in the first fully ecumenical council of the church, the one where not only the Pope but the Dalai Lama also gets to come, that we perceive ourselves as one before God, and we will not allow anyone else to divide us. Francis, I couldn't have provided a better statement to undergird my plans for the Global Congress than you have done in your paper. I hope you will feel comfortable to use our Africa Conference and our Global Congress to further the concerns you have so marvelously described in this paper. I hope that all of you will continue to look our way, to work with us, and to plan with us; to affirm in loud, global, planetary tones the creaturehood of all human persons in the hands of God and right of every human being to enough food, a good place to live, a clean environment, decent clothes, freedom from invasion from anybody's

CIA or army. If you will work with us and we with you, we shall do it together. You have been here today as we took the next step forward: we thank you for it.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION
May 28, 1978

Warren Lewis: I have put a poem on the board:

Axis Mundi
I am the center of the Cosmos
I command all the cosmic Forces
I am the Universal Pillar of the Cosmos
Africanus Universalis columna quasi sustinens omnia.
(Francis Africanus)

I read that poem through the perspective of the works on shamanism I have read—Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade, I.W. Lewis and Stephen Larsen. I wrote a paper for the last meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Francisco on the Rev. Moon as a shaman. I see him as directly, historically, umbilically influenced by north Korean shamanism. And as I read Francis' poem, I see the shaman's creed. "I am the center of the cosmos." —Every shaman believes that he is the center of the cosmos, climbs up his tree to get to the spirit world. "I command all the cosmic forces." —He visits the spirit world; he communicates in the spirit world with the angels, the demons, the dragons, the gods. "I am the Universal Pillar of the Cosmos." —He understands himself to be the one on whom the social order turns; and if he fails in his mission or his role, society collapses. We can think in terms of the local tribal shaman, who is helping to cure somebody of the measles; if he does not shake the gourds just right, or beat the drums properly, the measles will not be overcome. Or, in a broader cultural perspective, in the case of Rev. Moon—and I am speaking as a cultural anthropologist—I am not a Unificationist—he conceives of himself in this shamanic role; but, he's gone cosmic. He is no longer your local, north Korean tribal shaman but is now offering to perform that service for the entire world. And so is Francis Africanus; he is a messianic figure, too; he sees himself as Africanus Universalis columna quasi sustinens omnia. He speaks for Africa. He is the universal African, or he is the African who is the universal column, sustaining everthing that is.

Deotis (Roberts) said the other day that at the basic level of human religiosity is where the commonplaces are. I agree with that. Approaching the subject sociologically and psychologically, whether you come at it from a Jungian perspective in terms of the archetypes, or from an analysis of the function of religion in society as Archie Bahm approaches it, religious patterns are universally the same, and this is the astonishing thing. These basic universals are one pole of what we have been talking about. At the other pole, religious pluralism manifests itself in its concrete forms. A Korean shaman is as different from an African shaman or an American-Indian shaman as those persons are different from each other personally, linguistically, and culturally. They are unique individuals and, as such, manifest the pluralistic side. We move back and forth between two poles, now marveling at the commonness and alikeness of being, now reverencing the variety, the distinctions, and those points at which we are not alike. Both aspects are real and will continue.

Our proposal is to focus the attention of the religious people of the world on Africa and to do it in Africa. One of our approaches will be, as Deotis suggested, to get the Orientals and the Africans together. It would be an educational experience for both sides of the conversation, for the Oriental shamans to find out how African they are and for the African shamans to find out how Oriental they are. What else do we want to do?

Phillip McCracken (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): There are a lot of people in our world today who are really suffering. I want us to see that somehow we have to alleviate the pain. Somehow we have to bring about healing. There has to be at some point a statement as to how we can create a healing process.

Warren Lewis: At what points are we hurting? [Dr. Lewis begins listing on the blackboard, as people mention problem areas: racial problems, economics, imperialism, politics, hunger, war, lack of salvation, self-identity, health care, education, literacy.]

Thomas Walsh (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): It seems like we are treating symptoms and not the larger issue of values.

Warren Lewis: How do we get to values?

Thomas Walsh: Maybe that is the purpose of the conference: to decide where we have common human values.

Warren Lewis: Earlier, we talked about some stages we might go through to discover African values. We talked about small groups of people going to the villages, going places where autochthonous African religions are being practiced, and communicating with the practitioners. It seems that, on the one hand, we are suggesting a long-term period of study, serious study under the control of highly sophisticated methods. We cannot, however, define our congress simply in terms of study teams; and yet, somehow our congress must address itself to gathering fresh information.

Do we send people to make a religious visitation of Africa, preferably during some festival period of the year; and then, at the end of that time, all gather at some central location to talk over what we have come up with? How might that work?

William Jones: Before we can really do that, though, I feel that one way of attacking this problem is to determine what written materials are already available. We recognize that some of the available material is inadequate or biased; but if a group of African scholars in religion could pull together a working bibliograpy, this could be a prelude to the type of field study or field visit we are talking about. It might identify other areas on which the field study could focus. I would very much appreciate having an annotated bibliography from the standpoint of African scholars who know the materials and can make some suggestion about their value and quality from the African perspective for us in the West who do not have that kind of expertise.

Warren Lewis: For example, in our discussion yesterday, there were two points of theoretical disagreement: Mbiti's view of time, and whether or not the Africans believe in the afterlife. That's the kind of thing you could get some information on from an annotated bibliography. Does such a bibliography already exist?

Francis Botchway: No, it doesn't.

James Deotis Roberts: Who would supply that? [More brainstorming to compile a list of names of African scholars: Asare Opoku; Christian Gaba; Idowu; Arinze; Rohio (Nairobi); Sodipo; Kudajie; Quarco; Sawyerr (Nairobi); Shorter (Uganda); Amon D'Abi; Okot p'Bitek; Mveng; Kagama; Stanislav Adotevi (Senegal); Amouzou; Dzobo (Colombia); Carr (Liberia); Buthelezi (South Africa); Igure; Kwesi Dickson; Desmond Tutu; Assimeng (Sociologist); Diop; Mathias (University Bhutalizi); Montillus (Wayne State University of Detroit); Fonlon; I.F.A.N. Institute Senegal; Institute of African Studies; Lagon; Ife; Ibadan; Lagos; Nsukka; Nairobi; Mbiti (Geneva); Ilogu; Department of African Studies (Howard University); Christian Institute of South Africa (Capetown).]

Warren Lewis: Realistically speaking, how do we keep the field visit from becoming a kind of elitist tourism? How do we get something valuable to happen? What can we do and where to do it? How long should it take? How shall we go about setting it up so that the maximum good result would come about?

J. Deotis Roberts: I think it would make a lot of sense if, before we fanned out to the various places, there were a preliminary workshop centering on Africa, pooling our information, not just on religion, but also on certain aspects of culture, language, history, geography, etc. It is always desirable to have a general knowledge of the country, not just religion, before moving out into an African country.

William Jones: I think this preliminary work should be carried on exclusively by African scholars. The workshop could be a time for clarifying a methodology for the field visit.

Warren Lewis: I agree with that. We need African scholars, such as yourselves, to communicate with the people who will respond to our invitation and who want to meet Africa religiously. You would instruct these folk methodologically, so that they could benefit from the exercise. It seems to me that in terms of overall effectiveness, however, we do want to bring representatives from every kind of religious point of view face to face with religious Africa.

William Jones: I am talking about two different events. The field visit would be designed as an instrument to identify, record and report the current state of religious ideas of traditional Africa. You can call it a cultural-anthropological enterprise. Beyond this, we could also have a second field visit for the members of the larger conference which would not be an anthropological exercise but simply would widen the perspective of that group so that they can better understand the product of the earlier cultural-anthropological work. The first piece of work is a sensitive job and has to be done with a great deal of concern about precise methodology.

Francis (Botchway) indicated a helpful methodological point. We need to identify intermediary people who were raised in a traditional religious framework and who still retain some connection or understanding but who also speak our language. These intermediaries would help us during the field visits.

Francis Botchway: The identification of these intermediary people who still maintain ties with the practitioners of the religion is the work of the African scholars. There are people like Dr. Idowu and Dr. Gaba, who have been going back to the field, and Dr. Opoku, who has ties with the practitioners of the religions. I think people from Europe, from Asia, from the United States could go into the field with the Africans who have had the auto-ethnographic experience and who might be able to interpret the experience for the visitors as they visit the practitioners actually involved in their practices. I think we would gain much more than if we just go in, sit down and listen to the practitioner tell us what his world view is.

Warren Lewis: At what point would we bring in the outsiders? Educating the rest of the world is a main concern of us all. Certainly, we share the concern for uncovering Africa's religious wealth, exploiting the resources, so to speak; but, an equal or greater interest turns upon the point at which Africa meets the rest of the world and the rest of the world meets Africa. At what point do we bring the foreigners together with Africa?

Francis Botchway: At the larger African congress itself, after the workshop and field visits, we might have representatives from Asia, Europe and the United States as observers who would go to the field and experience some of these religious practices and have the interpretations and the analysis of them by the African scholars and intermediaries on the spot.

Warren Lewis: The people who will be leading the preliminary workshop are people who are already expert in the method they will be teaching. They shall receive critiques during the workshop, and we will thus be developing methodological improvements. In addition to acknowledged African scholars, others might emerge who, in your opinion as African scholars, might get to come along on the field visit. I'm going to work awfully hard between now and then to qualify myself to go with you. I want to be there, if I may, if I have a right to be there. After the methodological workshop and the field visits, we come together in the congress. Are there some spots in the field where we could send members of the congress on a type of field visit, where we know ahead of time it is going to be a profitable exercise? After this stage of the congressional field visits, then we would hold the plenary council. Is this the direction of the movement we are proposing? Does the congress have to go to the field, or can you bring the field to the congress?

Francis Botchway: The congress has to go to the field. We have a saying that, "You can't cross the ocean with your cosmic powers." We have one priestess in Ghana who was alleged to be very powerful. Then a group of Americans came to Ghana and were initiated. They invited her to come to New York City; but when she did come, and she has been coming almost every year, she lost almost all of her powers. She crossed the ocean.

Warren Lewis: Jesus had a similar problem. It is said he couldn't do many wonderful works in his own home town because of the disbelief of the people. Perhaps he should have crossed the ocean.

Francis Botchway: I think that in order really to appreciate the essence, importance and the meaning of the religious practices, the congress should visit the field. If you bring the authentic practitioners to the congress, to some university or metropolitan center, you will really be uprooting them from their milieu.

Warren Lewis: Just for the sake of helping me to fantasize and imagine, can you describe a couple of situations where we could send members of the congress? Suppose you have a thousand people coming to this conference. They will go to different places—to shrines, to famous trees, the sacred groves, to wherever it happens. And what might I see there if I were to be with that group?

Francis Botchway: You won't see anything! (Laughter)

Warren Lewis: That's what I'm afraid of! How many people can be a witness to an African religious happening?

Francis Botchway: You'll be a witness to the outward appearances, the rituals.

Victor Wan-Tatah: True; but within the context of festivals, we would see much more.

Warren Lewis: If I have an African scholar standing right next to me who is helping me to understand, who is explaining, teaching, who is interpreting, that's good.

Ekwueme Felix Okoli: I know a place where scholars have tried to enter but could not; they couldn't get into the place. Every person who gets into that place gets trapped by some forces somehow; and eight days later they come out somewhere else.

Francis Botchway: You have to pour out a libation to the gods before you enter.

Warren Lewis: We'll have to include a special category in our budget for libations.

Victor Wan-Tatah: Not only for libations, but for initiation too. The rite of passage has to be accomplished before you ever have equal status of a worshipper. And that does not occur in a short while; it takes some time; there are lots of conditions to meet.

Warren Lewis: I just have to say a word to us white Christians in the room: You know what we are letting ourselves in for? These Black Africans are about to convert us! What is this! African spiritual imperialism? (Laughter)

William Jones: We're fattening you up. (Laughter)

Kwame Gyekye: Have you read the book entitled *Jui-Jui in my Life?* It's a book by a British engineer who lived in Ghana for ten years and really experienced these things. Like every European, he had some doubt about these things; but he came out really believing.

Francis Botchway: He was sent to Ghana as an investigator for the government to help build a university. Things were often found to be missing—a few cement bags, iron rods, etc. The government was losing quite a lot; so they brought him in as an investigator; and he visited the university while it was being built. The workers were trying to remove a huge tree; they put a cable around it, and the caterpillar pulled, but the tree wouldn't budge. Then one of the workmen suggested that they go to the people across the street who might have their god in that tree; and, if there were a god in the tree, you couldn't move it unless a libation be poured and the gods be pacified. You have to move the gods first, and then you can move the tree. That was African nonsense in the opinion of the Europeans—African superstition. So they attempted to again pull the tree down, and the government man jumped onto the caterpillar himself; but the tree would not move. Then the Africans became afraid and said, "We won't do it again; the gods will bring all sorts of wrath on us." Instead, they went to the village and brought the priest. He poured a libation, asking the gods to move to another tree because this place was going to be used for a university for the god's own children and their children's children. When he was finished, they started putting the cables back around the tree, and the priest said, "No, just push the tree." They pushed, and the tree fell.

The government man documents all of this very graphically and says, "I tried to ask the Africans to explain it to me. I saw it, but I don't believe it."

Kwame Gyekye: But in the end, he comes away believing. And he ends up by saying that there are some things in Africa that one really should take quite seriously, and if he can, scientifically.

Francis Botchway: I will tell you a story about this school I went to in Accra—Kiro Boys' School. There was a tree there which was supposed to have been a fetish tree. When the school was built by the government, they decided to cut down that tree, but without pacifying the gods. The school was built, and the tree started to grow back. Each year at the university, because the gods were never pacified, one boy from the boys' school and one girl from the girls' school would die. Every year! When I was in my last year, we were all scared: who was going to go this year? "Not me! I'm not going!" we said; but one of us went, yes, every year. And it is still going on. They don't know anymore the rites they must perform to pacify the gods. But I think if they had done it back in the '20's when the school was built, all of these things would not be occurring. Nobody knows what to do.

Warren Lewis: My Unification colleagues are not telling you *their* stories, but let me suggest that the reason it's right for the Unification people to be involved in this is because they agree with you, and they know what you are talking about. They know that these things happen. Their grasp of the reality of the spirit world is remarkably similar to your own.

Ekwueme Felix Okoli: I think if we use the term "god," we mislead people. Rather, we should use "cosmic force." There is a belief in the balance in nature within the community, and there are certain things you do that will upset that balance; until you sacrifice certain things or perform certain rites to re-establish the balance, something wrong is going to happen in that community. It is a "force," really; not "gods." We have been trained to look at the Supreme Being as a being; that is tautological, no doubt, because of our training. When you begin to conceive of God or the Creator as a force, then you begin to see that everything has that divine spark, or force, in it. Thus, when you upset the cosmic balance, you upset that force so that you have to re-establish the equilibrium in order for the community to continue.

Phillip McCracken: I am thinking one issue we might want to deal with is the definition of evil. It is evil that moves men against their will, the kind of force that really gets us to do the things we don't want to do. We might well talk about racism in these terms, whenever that question becomes appropriate.

Francis Botchway: I agree. The African scholars should deal with that question. Dr. Okoli raised the question about "god;" I know, for instance, that my people do not use the terminology "god." Even though they refer to "Mau," in essence they are referring to a cosmic creative will. We all have that will, but the priests have more of the cosmic creative will than the average person. And those dead ancestors who have been deified can be invoked; and by them through the cosmic creative will. But if people go into the field to carry on this investigation, I'm sure we will get a lot of information.

Warren Lewis: How soon can we do this? We have to get a working bibliography gathered together, and communicate with the individuals, as well as a number of institutions. We have to identify the right people to conduct the preliminary workshop. The African scholars have to set up the field visits. Then, the field visits have to take place, and nobody yet has suggested how long that might last. Once the field visits have been accomplished, the congress participants can be divided into small units to make the congressional field visits. Then, at last, we can all come together.

William Jones: What is the date for the Global Congress? We can work back from that.

Warren Lewis: According to my personal timetable, it's 1981.

Phillip McCracken: It seems that if we want to have the properly rich experience during the congressional field visits, we should tie them in with the religious festivals. We have to be aware of what is happening in Africa and at what times.

Warren Lewis: Africa is on a cyclical, natural calendar; there are festivals at each important turning of the seasons.

Francis Botchway: In terms of time, if you want to get these academic people to the congress, the best time would be sometime when they are not in school.

Kwame Gyekye: Where will the preliminary workshop be held?

Warren Lewis: Shouldn't it be in Africa? Where are the people located who will take the major part at this level? Is the majority of the people in the United States and Europe and only a few in Africa, or is the majority in Africa?

Kwame Gyekye: The majority will come from Africa. The majority for the workshop will be African scholars, intermediaries, and a few Europeans and Americans and perhaps some Orientals. They will attend the workshop, acquaint themselves with the questions non-African scholars are asking, and then, armed with a common method, they will go to the field.

Francis Botchway: It would be much cheaper to hold the preliminary workshop in Africa.

Warren Lewis: Where shall we hold it in Africa?

Ekwueme Felix Okoli: It depends upon the situation in that country at that time. There are a number of factors. We might have to change the place even after we set it.

Kwame Gyekye: We can suggest a number of sites, a country in West Africa, one in East Africa, one in South Africa; later, on the basis of contingent factors, we could make one final choice.

Francis Botchway: I would suggest three cities: Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam, and Nsukka. (Not Lagos! In Lagos, it would take you three hours to go ten minutes.) (Laughter)

Warren Lewis: Could we do it in South Africa?

Several: Some of us could not go. Our passports do not allow us to enter.

Warren Lewis: This is really a university activity, isn't it? Some universities can handle this kind of exercise, whereas others cannot. So we have to think not only about the country, but also about the particular university.

Kwame Gyekye: Contacts are very important. Let us think in terms of university campuses where some of us or some of the African scholars work.

E.M. Uka (Graduate Student, Drew University): The University of Nigeria has a Department of African Studies as well as a Department of Religious Studies, and they publish a journal. There are scholars there who would be interested.

Francis Botchway: But there's a problem of getting a visa to Nigeria. But almost everywhere in Africa is difficult. Guinea is impossible.

Warren Lewis: How about Nairobi? My impression is that Nairobi is the place everybody goes to in Africa. From that point of view, I hesitate: we're not tourists.

Ekwueme Felix Okoli: The problem I have with Nairobi is this: Nairobi as a crossroads suffers from so much imperial influence. I don't know if you could hold a conference there unhampered by curious people asking, "What are you people doing here?" or fearing that we will discuss the situation in Zaire or Zimbabwe, etc. We want to go somewhere where it will be clearly seen that we are looking for values.

Warren Lewis: I would rather meet under a fetish tree than meet in a Westernized city where the spiritual atmosphere is wrong.

J. Deotis Roberts: My personal feeling is that Nigeria would be the place to go. That is the heartland, if you speak of traditional African religion; and they have far more independent churches as well. It is worth the effort.

Warren Lewis: Where does Islam fit into this? We speak only of sub-Saharan Africa. We must think more about Islam. Let's ask the question of co-sponsorship. Deotis, can we get the Temple of Understanding to do this with us?

J. Deotis Roberts: I hope so. They need to go to Africa.

Warren Lewis: Who else besides the Temple of Understanding?

Victor Wan-Tatah: The All African Council of Churches (AACC). Their headquarters is in Nairobi. By the way, Canon Carr is secretary. *Time* has distorted everything going on in Nairobi around him. Meeting him personally will show you how badly they have misrepresented him.

Warren Lewis: It sounds like Canon Carr has problems similar to the ones Rev. Moon has. If the African Council of Churches were to collaborate with us, would that create problems for some people?

Francis Botchway: You see, Carr was taking a very active role about the question of Zimbabwe and South African racism. This did not sit very well with some of the members in the hierarchy of the Association.

Victor Wan-Tatah: He was very vocal on these issues. He was never reticent, not even on issues which affected the Kenyan government; that is where he really got in trouble.

Warren Lewis: What about the World Council of Churches; it will surely be interested in this. What about Muslim institutions?

Francis Botchway: There is an important Muslim institution in Saudi Arabia, the World Congress of Islam. Headquarters is in Jidda. I suggest we get a list of the various Islamic associations in Africa and then contact them individually to see if they be interested in taking part in the conference. I think they should be included. Islam is part of African religion.

Warren Lewis: What about the Egyptians? They seem to be something completely different to me. Am I wrong about that? What about the Coptic Christians? It seems to me that the Copts and the Muslims and the African Jews and the Ethiopian church ought to all be included.

Phillip McCracken: Dr. Roberts talked about Africa south of the Sahara. Do you think we might want to split the conference and deal with the Mediterranean separately?

Francis Botchway: Even south of the Sahara there are so many areas which are heavily Islamized: Mauritania, Somalia, Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, Northern Nigeria, Guinea, Chad, and so on.

Warren Lewis: I think it serves our common purpose to have Islam at the table with us. We are as interested in indigenized religions as we are autochthonous ones. Besides, Islam, where it has syncretized with traditional African religions, is bound to be different from Islam in other parts of the world. Where are we going to get the money for all this?

William Jones: Cake sale. (Laughter)

Kwame Gyekye: I think the focus of the conference should be African religions. After all, much is already known about Islam, its doctrines, the Quran. But what we want is to produce a religious testament of Africa. We want to know the body of doctrine of African traditional religion.

Warren Lewis: We are envisioning a two-stage process; the first stage is what you just said, Kwame. After the first stage, these other people become involved so that we all can teach and be taught.

Ekwueme Felix Okoli: There are a lot of African influences in some of the Islamic sects. When you take Nigeria, for example, the type of Islamic script you find there, the Hausa language written in Ijama script, is indigenous to that area and has had an influence on the development of Islam, as such. We can see the influence of African culture on Islam in those areas.

Warren Lewis: That's got to be true; Islam is no more innocent of cultural synthesis than Christianity or any other religion in history.

Ekwueme Felix Okoli: Especially not in Nigeria. The indigenous language has been used to conceptualize Islamic values. But language is a bearer of cultural values and concepts. The result in Nigeria would be considered a synthesis of Islamic value and Nigerian value.

Warren Lewis: There is a sense in which an Arabian Muslim would be the first person to recognize that, what with the insistence that the Quran must be read in Arabic.

Francis Botchway: The Quran is read in Arabic all over the East and in Arabia; but Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, to some extent, is different from Islam in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and all over the Punjabi area. Islam in West Africa seems to be much more mystical than Islam in Saudi Arabia. And the mystical aspect of Islam in West Africa—in Senegal and northern Nigeria—takes on a lot of the attributes of traditional African religion, which you don't find in Saudi Arabia.

Warren Lewis: The big question for discussion at table is this: are there corporations, are there interest groups, is there oil money? Where are we going to get the funds? Unification Seminary is willing to prime the pump. We're already quite extended into this cause financially. But we must consider that we are discussing millions, in the final analysis. Where will we find co-sponsorship both in terms of wisdom and money?

Let's go eat!

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

William Jones: For our last session together, we have a distinguished scholar from Uganda, Dr. Aloysius Lugira. He is currently visiting professor of African Religions at Harvard Divinity School. Dr. Lugira has done work at Freiburg University in Switzerland and also Freiburg University in Germany—he did his terminal degree in social anthropology at Oxford. He has been visiting professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz. He is the chairperson of the department of religion and philosophy at Makerere University in Uganda. He has written a number of works in his maternal language, one of which has been translated into English on Ganda art, which deals with the acculturation of Ganda art to Christian art.

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Dr. Aloysius Lugira

"Out of Africa there is always something new"[1] is an adage that, for better or for worse, most graphically bears witness to the novelty of African happenings. Things are happening in Africa! The way they happen in positive terms may be summarized in Julius K. Nyerere's words: "For too long we in Africa—and Tanzania as part of Africa—have slept, and allowed the rest of the world to walk round and over us. Now we are beginning to wake up and to join with our fellow human beings in deciding the destiny of the human race. By thinking out our own problems on the basis of those principles which have universal validity, Tanzania will make its contribution to the development of mankind. That is our opportunity and responsibiilty."[2]

Seen in the light of the above-quoted statement, African Christian theology is a new thinking out of African religious affairs within the context of African Christianity as related to humanity in general and African peoples in particular. It is a discipline which has recently appeared on the African scene.

For the sake of clarity the paper proceeds by considering African religion, the means by which Africans have from time immemorial held beliefs and practices concerning God as the Supreme Being. The presence of Christianity as a base of theologizing will be outlined. And African Christian theology in contemporary Africa will be discussed.

African Religion

Theology as a word about God, a discourse, a talk and a reflection about God and things divine finds its roots in religion. That being the case, before one can confidently embark on an exposition of what African Christian theology stands for, it is important first to be clear about the relationship that exists between African religion on one hand and African theology as well as African Christianity on the other.

Without trying to appear as if I am engaged in the exercise of flogging dead horses, it had been said and it is true that there is a good number of people who by trying to deny the existence of African religion still maintain views like those of Sir Samuel Baker, who would shamelessly profess about Africans that, "Without any exception, they (the Northern Nilotes, a group who live in Southern Sudan) are without a belief in a Supreme Being, neither have they any form of worship or idolatry; nor is the darkness of their minds enlightened by even a ray of superstition. The mind is as stagnant as the morass which forms its puny world."[3] Whether by intention or by default, Baker's statement was a mistake, a great mistake but a happy mistake. It was a happy mistake for it turned out to be a challenge which in one way or another prompted the appearance of two of the most excellent studies in African religion. Indeed, for any aspirant of African theology as well as African Christian theology, *Nuer Religion,* by Evans-Pritchard, and *Divinity and Experience,* by Godfrey Lienhardt, should be considered as musts. Even if their end result was to disprove Baker's statement which had passionately denied the existence of religion among the Northern Nilotes, the message carried by these two books is profitably inspirational to religionists engaged in the study of the religion of African peoples.

African religion as an indispensable partner in the quest of African Christian theology has for a long time suffered from descriptive titles. Many of the titles given to African religion have missed the point either because of their inadequacy or even because of their pejorative innuendoes. Evolutionary approaches to the study of African religion have historically engendered such clearly derogatory terms like fetishism, superstitions, heathenism, and paganism. Through the same approaches, diplomatically derogatory terms in reference to African religion, like animism, primal religion, and tribal religion, have been coined, propagated, and not a few people would still like to abide by the *status quo.* The usage of such terms should be discouraged, not because of the sentiments they very often manage to provoke, but mainly because they are unscientific. One might recommend on this point having a look at Professor Francis L.K. Hsu's article on "Rethinking the Concept Primitive,"[4] as well as Professor E. Bolaji Idowu's "Errors of Terminology."[5] Furthermore, religionists should get better accustomed to addressing themselves to African religions in accordance with the terms that express what those religions are and what they stand for and not simply what one may wish them to be called. We may thus refer to Akan religion, Ibo religion, Gikuyu religion, Lugbara religion, Nuer religion and so forth.

What, then, is African religion? African religion may be described as beliefs and practices concerning the Supreme Being as well as superhuman beings. It is a religion which is one in the oneness of essence and many in the plurality of expression. It is by this character that one can speak about African religion in singular and African religions in plural.

African religion is self-contained. It regards Christianity and Islam as counterparts which enjoy some similarities in as far as considerations like that of the Supreme Being are concerned.

That Christianity and Islam stand as counterparts of African religion, it will not be accurate to speak of "Independent Churches" and "African Islam" under the general umbrella of African religions, as Benjamin Ray seems to suggest.[6]

No matter how acculturated to the African milieu Islam may be, Islam following the Quranic message will always remain Islam. No matter how incarnated in the African atmosphere Christianity may be, Christianity, if she is still to be true to the Bible message, will always remain Christianity.

By way of seeking clear distinctions between the two sets of religions, namely African religions and Christianity/Islam, various descriptions have been suggested. Following in the footsteps of W. Robertson Smith,[7] various authors, including G. Parrinder[8] and E. Bolaji Idowu,[9] have chosen to qualify sub-Saharan indigenous religions as being *traditional*. W. Robertson Smith categorizes religions in two groups: *traditional* religions and *positive* religions.[10] The former are described as being spontaneous, having no writings and having been handed down spontaneously from generation to generation. The latter are religions like Christianity, which have clearly identified founders with positively recorded revelations, which characterizes them as religions of a *book*. This division of religions into *traditional* and *positive* runs the risk of inadvertently inducing impressions of negativity concerning the so-called traditional religions. Moreover, historically speaking, one may even wonder as to whether Christianity or Islam[11] may not in some African instances be referred to as traditional!

When all this is said about African religion and with the view of adequately relating the various theological developments to the existing religions in Africa, one can refer to African religions as being *autochthonous religions,* on one hand, and Christianity and Islam as *extended religions* on the other. While the *autochthonous* nature of African religions is seen through the fact that these religions are the aboriginal religions of the African lands, *extended* religions are those whose birth localities are in places and regions other than Africa. By their nature, extended religions are open to becoming acculturated and indigenized to other geographical, cultural, and psychological regions where they happen to land.

The position of African religions has to be clearly identified if they are to make a meaningful contribution to the development of African Christian theology.

The Presence of Christianity in Africa

Indeed, "in many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he was spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world" (Hebrews 1:1-2). Just as God speaks in many and various ways to humanity, so do peoples variously speak about God according to their different endowments and genius. The extension and presence of Christianity in Africa has acculturatively added new perspectives to autochthonously African concepts of God. In order to be in position to depict an adequate picture of African Christian theology, it is imperative to give a historical background of the presence of Christianity and the kind of theological impact Christianity has had on the African scene. The presence of Christianity in Africa may be seen in three stages.

Firstly, in a way some Africans feel amused and flattered to think that Christianity was extended to Africa even before Christianity was formally established. Others prefer to put it in this way, that Christianity was extended to Africa even before it went to Europe. It is recorded in the New Testament that Joseph and Mary with the child Jesus took flight into Egypt. Christ as a *refugee* was cradled on the *unifying* waters of the Nile, whose source is located in the very heart of Africa. No wonder that right from the Apostolic Age, African Christianity vigorously flourished up to the outbreak of the ordeal with Islam in the seventh century. Africa, as it were, had shared in the primal blessings of the very founder of Christianity.

Secondly, under the Portuguese prowess of the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, Christianity was extended as far south as the Congo, the home country of King Alphonso, whose son Henry was ordained priest and in 1518 was raised, as the first from sub-Saharan Black Africa, to the rank of a bishop[12].

Thirdly, the nineteenth century dawned with a dramatic missionary awakening. New Missionary Societies were established. The African continent was penetrated at various entry points by floods of missions.

The Theological Impact of the Three Stages

The first stage of the Christian presence on the continent of Africa can theologically be summarized in the triumvirate of Augustine-Cyprian-Tertullian. But above all, for the purpose of theological incarnation and acculturation, Augustine is excelled by none. He may be studied as a philosopher who took up and acclimatized into Christianity certain Platonistic themes (e.g., knowledge by participation in divine light, wisdom and contemplation, time and eternity). He should be studied as an exegete "who knew and understood how to put all the resources of culture at the service of a better understanding of Scripture."[13] But, to my knowledge, no one has ever studied Augustine as an *African* theologian. At least geographically, Augustine was an African, as were Tertullian and Cyprian. But their Africaness is yet to be discovered. How much and in what ways did Africa influence and help form the theologies of these seminal and normative Christian theologians?

Augustine provides one of the best examples and animators for those who are engaged in the pursuit of *home-grown* Christian theology.

The second stage of Christian presence on the African continent is characterized by the Portuguese presence in some coast lands as well as in some islands of sub-Saharan Africa, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. Christian events in the kingdom of the Congo of that period give us some glimpses of the type of theology which was being imparted to the people of this region. As has been mentioned above, a number of young men were sent to Lisbon to train for priesthood. Henry, the son of King Alphonso, became the first Black African to be elevated by Leo X to the episcopacy, as titular bishop of Utica and Vicar Apostolic of the Congo, with residence at San Salvador, the capital, whose poetically significant name of Mbanza Kongo had been changed in favour of a Portuguese-Christian one. Groves' description of the situation gives abundant evidence to theological implications when he writes:

"Despite the energetic support given by Alphonso to the Christian cause, there is little evidence of radical change among the population. In externals, however, a veritable Portuguese mantle had been thrown over dusty society."[14]

This kind of Christian development was a cause of great displeasure to the ordinary people of the Congo and to the devoted adherents of old religion. The theology introduced and practiced in Africa under such circumstances was one of *alienation.*

The third stage of Christian presence can be characterized with what one may refer to as the period of *missionary theological development* in sub-Saharan Africa. It is during this time that we see the mushrooming of a number of training centers described either as seminaries or theological colleges or other like names according to the denominational preferences for such institutions.

From the Protestant point of view, Sundkler's *The Christian Ministry in Africa*[15] makes a good coverage of the period up to the time when serious overtures to African Christian theology begin to surface. As far as the Roman Catholic developments are concerned, Morant's *Die Philosophisch-Theologische Bildung in den Priesterseminarien Schwarz-Afrikas,*[16] can be considered as one of the most relevant monographs to the concerns of this paper. To be a theologian from such institutions as described in those two books or from theological colleges and departments of theology in the North Atlantic countries has its own meaning. It meant that one could enjoy the complacency or even take pride in having had the opportunity of having been initiated in the theological traditions of the West represented by celebrities like Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Karl Rahner, Bernard Haering and many others. It meant that one was a theologian because he was so trained as somehow to be able to sing, to repeat again and again the theological tunes of Western theologians.

But even if they may be like voices crying in the wilderness, there were a few individuals in this period who saw the need of a theology that requires one to begin with the understanding of the peoples' lives and their heritage in order to be able to lay a solid foundation for a "self-supporting, self-governing, and self-extending" Christianity in Africa. Among peoples of such foresighted views were Bruno Gutmann and Roland Allen.

"Allen was convinced from the very beginning that 'Church order is not the enemy of the natural and instinctive' and he shared Gutmann's fears of institutions, classifying the theological school as a mission institution."[17] As Sundkler observes, according to Allen, "the education of the leaders of the church was divorced from the Church through mission institutions. . . . They were trained because foreigners wanted to train them in their own way. In relation to the native Church they were often as foreign as the foreign missionaries"[18].

Gutmann's theological views for an African Church were based on the realization of the necessity of putting into account the people's heritage, if missionaries were to reap meaningful fruits of their endeavor. Seasoned by the then rampant arbitrariness of colonialism and imperialism, Kraemer passionately retorted in the following manner:

"From the standpoint of fundamental thinking it seems to us that the background of le Zoute or of those who think in the lines of Dr. Gutmann is unwittingly a kind of romanticism. The deep emotional vein that runs through it comes from having fallen in love with the 'primitive' institutions, attitudes, and capacities. After the period of narrow-minded blindness to the value and significance of primitive life-apprehensions and life patterns, this is psychologically quite intelligible as a reaction. Romantic love-making, however, is no good and lasting foundation to building strong and lasting Christian churches upon, though naturally this is what everybody aims at achieving. Dr. Gutmann, in our opinion, errs in another direction, by conceiving the tribal life-structures and patterns as 'creational orders,' that is to say, as divinely sanctioned structures. Clan, tribe, people, nation, etc., are forms and spheres of life that are direct consequences of God's will. This is romanticism fortified by the weight of metaphysical reasoning."[19]

With this exchange of words one waited for history to be the witness. Certainly, if Kraemer could himself revise the above statement today, the tone would be completely different. For Gutmann's foundations among the Chagga of Tanzania at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro have shown their worth both spiritually and materially. Above all, it is the building on such foundations as were laid by Gutmann that Makumira Theological College in that area is proving to be the focal point for the birth of African Christian theology. As much as I know, it is the only Black African theological college which awards degrees as well as having an African language as the medium of instruction.[20]

Some amount of arrogance in communicating the Christian message to peoples of cultures other than the Western ones has stunted the growth of Christian theology in Africa. It is that arrogance that Gutmann intended to counteract by his Christian approach to

African heritage as a means of proper laying of Christian foundations among the Chagga.

In order to develop a good view of Gutmann's contribution, it will not suffice to single out only one of his books as several of his critics have done.[21] His three treatises on the science of missions must be taken together in order to catch a complete picture of his theology.[22]

African Christian Theology Today

It was in the fifties that the winds of change in sub-Saharan Africa brought about a new atmosphere in that part of the world. It was during those years that promises of political emancipation began to develop signs of confidence, dignity and self-fulfillment. It was up to the leaders to try and read the signs of the times.

It was in Kampala, Uganda, that on April 20, 1963, in a typically African style African drums joyously signalled the birth of the All African Conference of Churches which brings all Protestant churches on the continent to sound with one liberating and prophesying voice. This meant a beginning of a beginning. The ecumenical theology of this body since then, from an administrative level, became an inspiration to theologians engaged in the pursuit of an African Christian theology.

The ecumenical visit of Pope Paul VI to Kampala, Uganda, of July, 1969, became an epoch-making event as far as Christian theological endeavours in sub-Saharan Africa are concerned. The memorable statement of that visit gave a new impetus towards an African Christian theology to both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in Africa. The pertinent section of the statement is as follows: "The expression, that is, the language and mode of manifesting the one faith, may be manifold; hence it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius and the culture of the one who professes this one faith. From this point of view a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable. An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favoured by the Church. The liturgical renewal is a living example of this. And in this sense, you may, and you must, have an African Christianity."[23]

This time the affairs of Christian development are not run according to missionaries in the field *versus* missionary headquarters either in Europe or America. This time, the whole show is supposed to be run, in a concerted way, from and within the African continent.

While administratively the All African Conference of Churches (AACC), based in Nairobi, Kenya, takes care of developments from the Protestant point of view, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, based in Accra, Ghana, cares for the Roman Catholic developments. It is so easy for the two bodies reciprocally to exchange notes.

The sixties saw vigorous establishment of the departments of theology and religious studies at various African universities. It is since then that theology stopped being a monopoly of theological colleges and seminaries. Instead, the latter became regionally associated and established links with African universities. These are some of the developments which make the pursuit of African Christian theology excitingly creative and cooperatively pluralistic.

It was Professor E.B. Idowu who in unequivocal terms first seriously called upon his fellow African theologians to come out of their hiding corners and squarely face their responsibilities of producing relevant and meaningful theologies which would meet the spiritual needs of African peoples.[24] Since this call, conferences and consultations on African Christian theology have taken place in different parts of Africa on this vital subject.[25]

However, in spite of consultations, theology in Africa still poses questions concerning definition, methodology, sources, trends and concerns for the future.

Theology in Africa

Bearing in mind that theology is a talk about God and related things, that kind of talk can be carried out in Africa in a number of ways. Religiously, ethnically, and temperamentally, Africa is a place of variety. Under "Theology in Africa" one can talk about many theologies.

African Theology

African theology is a phrase which seems to be in use with an ambivalence which should not be allowed to continue without explanation. African peoples record their great ideas and serious reflections in proverbs. The Barundi of Burundi say that "The creature is not greater than its Creator"[26]; the Akan of Ghana say that "God needs no pointing out to a child"[27]; the Jabo of Liberia say that "We invoke God; we do not invoke Eternity"[28]; the Kikuyu in Kenya say that "The enemy of a man is not God"[29].

These are proverbs which show how some Africans have talked about God and his related creatures for many, many years. A proverb in African tradition is not only a didactical saying. It is a storehouse of native wisdom and philosophy fraught with wit, rhetoric, humor and poetic value. A proverb on God is seriously a talk, a reflection, on God, the unravelling of which may result into books. It is African theology.

P'Bitek Okot accuses Danquah, Idowu and Mbiti, when writing on African religions, of being intellectual smugglers. What they have written, in the case of Danquah, *Akan Doctrine of God,* in the case of Idowu, *Oludumare: God in Yoruba Belief;* or Mbiti's *Concepts of God in Africa,* even if there are flaws and loopholes, are still an expression of what one may call African theology.

A number of theologians and religionists, among whom one would include Bishop Desmond Tutu and John Mbiti, have introduced the subject of African theology; but the way they have introduced it requires a real clarification and probably some good revision. It is a bit dishonest to talk about African theology, while in actual fact one intends to speak about African Christian theology. To my mind, these two things are different. African theology is *African* God-talk and African Christian theology has a different point of departure. The flavor of African religion or African theology and the flavor of Christian theology are different; but when we combine them, we create a new synthesis that we may honestly refer to as being African Christian theology.

African Christian Theology

African Christian theology has been variously described. Broadly, African Christian theologians are expected to relate the Christian message to their particular cultural, social and political situations. Consequently, by nature, African Christian theology will be pluralistically ready always to be in position to read the signs of the times. It will be dynamic in a sense that it is an ever-renewed re-interpretation to new generations and peoples of the Christian message and a re-presentation of the will and the way of the one Christ in a dialogue with new thought forms and culture patterns.

Sources of African Christian Theology

To do this type of African Christian theology, what are the possible sources? Of course, a basic source for doing anything Christian is the Bible.

1. The Bible

The Bible is the basic and main source of any Christian theology.

No theology can claim to be Christian and disassociate itself from Biblical revelation as the primary source of the Christian faith. The Bible in this sense has to be understood in its totality to include both the Old and the New Testaments. African religions will not do as a substitute for the Old Testament.

2. The Christian Heritage

Next we have the totality of church history or the Christian heritage, even though when I talk about *the* Christian heritage, probably I should need some other qualification. I think when we talk about church history as a source, then we are giving it its proper importance; because, doing a theology without church history means beating about the bush.

3. African Religions—the autochthonous religions native to African soil.

4. African Initiated Churches

We are further presented these days with a multiplicity of what I prefer to call the African-initiated churches.

5. Anthropology and the Realities of African Life

African Christianity has suffered much from some of the approaches. I wouldn't like to embarass anybody; but when the missionaries came, most of the missionary societies were revivalist; they were evangelicals. What they taught about the Bible led their converts into being too fundamentalist. I think the fundamentalists and the evangelistic approach does not really help us to come to this new thing we call African Christian theology; and it's because of this that there has been so much mud-flinging, one African theologian against another. One says, "Oh, look, what we are doing–you are trying to create a pagan-Christian theology, which probably is not the proper thing to be done!" One such person was a colleague, who unfortunately died not long ago, by the name of Byoung Catoh. He wrote a monograph on the theoretical pitfalls in African theology. He was an evangelical Christian, and his book has caused a lot of dust, particularly as a result of calling other theologians, who would try to stick to real principles of exegetical approach, "new pagans." Rev. Byoung Catoh was a representative of Billy Graham in Africa. But, of course, when these problems come it means that there is something healthy going on.

Another problem African Christian theologies face from the

Biblical point of view relates to one's understanding of the Old Testament. There are some African theologians who think that, since African religion is now in a good position, probably we no longer need the Old and New Testament, or, at least, the African religion should substitute for the Old Testament. But, believing in Christ as we do, it is my opinion that he came to fulfill, not to destroy the Old. I can hardly see how one would say we can exclude the Old Testament and substitute the African religion for it.

The African-initiated churches are something new. Some people prefer to call them "independent" churches, and others call them schismatic churches, and others would call them separatist churches. But the main point is to acknowledge that they are a theological source, because they give some new interpretations. They are churches, and their leaders and followers confess that they are Christian. The approaches they take in establishing these new bodies should be considered by African theologians as probably sources and means towards a re-interpretation and incarnational or acculturational exercise in theology, helping us render Christian theology African.

Then, we have anthropology. Much of what we talk about in African religion has been supplied to us by anthropologists. But the impression anthropologists tend to give is that anthropology is the study of inferior men by higher men. For this reason many African universities are discouraging anthropology and the people opt for sociology instead.

A final point is the struggle going on in Africa for the transformation of society: the struggle over the socio-economic systems, the struggle against racism, the struggle against the political movement, the struggle of the African Black against other African Blacks. All these things ought to be considered as sources that help us to focus our attention on African Christian theological thinking.

In a special way, I should like to mention liberation theology. The theology of liberation has come to Africa mainly through South Africa, where the definition is that it is a theology of the oppressed for the oppressed and by the oppressed; and, sometimes, it is referred to as being Black theology. On the African scene there is a divergence of opinions on whether African Christian theology should be known as Black theology. Black theology, as presented in the Union of South Africa, is a part of African Christian theology, rather than *the* African Christian theology. In other words, African Christian theology is pluralistic, and because it is pluralistic, it can therefore include African Orthodox theology, Ugandan African Christian theology, and it can also contain Black theology as we find it being developed in South Africa. I stress this because I am of the opinion that Black theology under African circumstances is probably a transient one, transient in the sense that Black theology in South Africa has its real value as a tactical theology, unless one was developing Black theology based on the philosophy of negritude. Then, the case would be different; but if we take Black theology as being something different from the philosophy of negritude, then we are confusing issues when we term it the African Christian theology.

In conclusion, wittingly or unwittingly, positively or negatively, and even passively, Christianity in Africa can be held responsible for many happenings we see today on the African continent. It is this same Christianity which has to view and re-view herself critically if she wants to be in a position to accomplish the great commission with which she is commissioned. Christianity has to approach herself critically if she would be all in all in order to be able to bring about salvation and liberation of mankind in full. This is what African Christian theology should be standing for.

With all these sources at their disposal, African theologians have to work hard. The task ahead is not an easy one. But with persistence and will, success has to come. In the words of Augustine of old: "Where there is love there is no labour and if there is labour, then labour is loved." It is indeed no secret that dehumanizing injustices are everywhere in this world, Africa included. African Christian theology must be a contextual theology. That is, theology which is accountable to the context in which people live. It must seriously address itself to the liberation of the people from all captivity.

Notes

[1] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Bk VIII, 17.

[2] *Nyerere on Socialism*, Dar-es-Salaam, OUP 1969, p. 58.

[3] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, E.E., *Theories of Primitive Religion*, Oxford 1965, pp. 6-7.

[4] *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 5 No. 3 (1964), pp. 169-178.

[5] *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, pp. 108-134.

[6] Cf. *African Religions: Symbols, Ritual and Community*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1976.

[7] *The Religion of the Semites*, London, 1889.

[8] *African Traditional Religion*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1976.

[9] *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, London: SCM Press, 1973.

[10] Op. cit. pp. 1-2.

[11] E.G. in Ethiopia, Mauritania.

[12] Groves, C.P., *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, Vol. I, p. 127.

[13] Camelot, Th. "The Fathers and Doctors of the Church," in Henry, A.M., ed., *Introduction to Theology*, Chicago, pp. 162-63.

[14] Op. cit., p. 129.

[15] Sundkler, Bengt, *The Christian Ministry in Africa*, London: SCM, 1960.

[16] Morant, P., Dr. Adelrich, *Die Philosophisch-Theologische Bildung in den Priesterseminarien Schwarz-Afrikas*, Schoeneck-Beckenried, 1959.

[17] Sundkler, op. cit., p. 58.

[18] Allen, Roland, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 2nd ed. 1949, pp. 173, 192.

[19] Kraemer, Hendrik, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London: Harper and Brothers, 1938), p. 340.

[20] Cf., e.g., Howard S. Olsen, "Swahili as an Educational Medium," in *Africa Theological Journal* (Makumira Lutheran Theological College, Tanzania), No. 4, August 1971, pp. 25-39.

[21] Oosthuizen, G. C., *Post Christian in Africa: A Theological and Anthropological Study* (London, 1967), p. 223, followed by Kwesi Dickson, "Towards a Theologia Africana" in Glasswell, M. E. and Edward W. Fasholé-Luke eds., *New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World*, p. 201.

[22] *Christusleib und Näichstenschaft*, (Freuchtwangen, 1931); *Freies Menschentum aus ewigen Bindungern* (Kasse); *Gemeinde Aufbau aus dem Evangelium*, (Leipzig, 1925). Cf. also J. H. Oldham and B. D. Gibson, *The Remaking of Man in Africa* (London: OUP), pp. 53-54, 94, 146.

[23] Pope Paul's Address at the Closing of the All African Bishops' Symposium, Kampala, Rubaga Cathedral, July 31, 1969 in *African Ecclesiastical Review*, Vol. X, No. 4, (1969), pp. 402-405.

[24] E. Bolaji Idowu, *Towards an Indigenous Church*, (Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 22ff.

[25] 1966—a consultation of African theologians was held at Immanuel College, Ibadan, Nigeria, under the auspices of the AACC.
1968—Theological Study Week, Kinshasha.
1971—a consultation in Dar-es-Salaam.
1972—a consultation in Makerere University.
1973—a consultation in New York.
1974—a consultation in Accra, Ghana.
1976—a consultation in Dar-es-Salaam.
1977—a consultation in Accra, Ghana.

[26] E. W. Smith, *African Ideas of God*, p. 196.

[27] Danquah, *Akan Doctrine of God.*

[28] G. Herzog, *Jabo Proverbs from Liberia*, p. 19.

[29] Cagnolo, *The Agikuyu*, p. 219.

Discussion

J. Deotis Roberts: You mentioned that liberation from oppression is really a central focus. In my writings I have emphasized also the total cultural dimension, which I think opens up some dialogue with all of Africa, not with just the Black power dynamics between Black theology and Southern Africa, where obviously the political liberation thrust is being focused. Do you see that as having real possibilities for creative discussion where you are and in other parts of Africa? In the same way that you are destined to get back to the bedrock experience of African traditional religions, the American Black is also searching for his traditional spiritual Black experience. How would you define it?

Aloysius Lugira: Your approach of considering Black theology within a general philosophical perspective directly focused on negritude would help establish not a transient, Black theology, as in the case of South Africa, but a more universal Black theology. I would be inclined to interpret a Black theological view of God as being oriented to Blackness per se, not as a transient sort of tactical theology, but something theologically permanent in the Black situation. The crises of the Black situation do not last only tomorrow and then end. They will go on. When the oppressions completely disappear, still the element of Blackness will remain. But of course it would be very unrealistic to say that oppression will ever disappear. We find people within the same oppression oppressing each other! I would give one very very good example to show what I mean by that: One day I visited with a Black friend, and we were having a cup of tea at the table. His children arrived from school, jovially shouting and so on. Then they caught sight of me; one of the youngsters pointed at me, "This one comes from Africa." I said, "What do you mean? How do you know that I come from Africa?" He said, "Because you are Black." (laughter) Of course, I had to talk to my friend about that. He explained it to me: "He says you are Black; the children see this, because your color is a little darker than ours." This might seem a little trivial, but in fact it focuses one's attention on negritude.

Now this other point: Mbiti would suggest that Black theology as you Westerners do it is none of our African business; let us do our own theology and you do yours. But I'm thinking that is non-Christian. Now, I'm not passing judgment on Mbiti. But I'm looking at the statement. Theology, as soon as you say it, is Christianity, or it is a Christian theology, and it is following the Christian message. It means that in spite of the plurality of considerations, still there is an element binding all of us in a universal way.

J. Deotis Roberts: Just this comment: The discussion of both Black and African theology will obviously have to go beyond those two figures, Mbiti and Catoh. Here in this room, Bill and I represent two quite different Black perspectives...

Aloysius Lugira: Certainly, certainly! I intentionally mentioned only those two names. I know your stand, and your stand is universalist, if I am interpreting you correctly. As long as we talk about Christianity, we are talking about the oppressed. But what about the oppressors? If we have to theologize, let us theologize for the oppressed as well as for the oppressors.

Unidentified Speaker: I'm not very well acquainted with the content of African Christian theology in detail; but, I suppose it would involve the attempt to give some African twist or re-orientation to orthodox Christian theology. Would you then regard African Christian theology as a response to the failure of Christianity and traditional Christian theology to live up to the original ideal?

Aloysius Lugira: Probably it is more than a twist. It's more than a twist because African theologians want to express Christianity in a way that accommodates the African situation. If you talk about twists, we might as well talk about fashion. But it is not a matter of being fashionable to talk about African Christianity; rather, it is a necessity, for the sake of giving a more meaningful presentation of the Christian message. As to the failure of Christianity in Africa, that is exactly why we are trying to establish African Christianity. As soon as Christianity fails to be meaningful in a given environment, and as soon as we realize that it is because Christianity is being presented in a way which is fooling the people, then we are talking in terms of cause and effect. The two aspects of your question go together to demand an observation on the cause of this failure. The cause, I think, is that Christian theology has tended to alienate people from what they are.

Francis Botchway: I'm still not very clear as to what African Christian theology is all about, and the difference between African Christian theology and Black theology. You seem to suggest that African Christian theology is an attempt to make the Christian religion much more meaningful to the African.

Aloysius Lugira: ...and relevant.

Francis Botchway: Do you consider that to be a reaction to the furtherment of failures of Euro-Christianity in Africa? If so, how does that differ from Black theology, which, as you suggested earlier, is the tactical theology to liberate people who are oppressed?

Is the African under Euro-Christianity not meant to live oppressed to the extent that his very acceptance of Euro-Christianity denies him his full authenticity as an African? How do you solve that question? An African who is a Christian denies his own Africanness as an African, does he not?

Aloysius Lugira: I tried to express that in African Christian theologizing we aim at getting ourselves liberated from all types of captivity. Because, if you say Christian theology or European Christianity is oppressive mainly because it has made us afraid to become ourselves or to be what we are to be, then that oppression is a type of captivity. African Christian theology is a way to inspire confidence in ourselves, to inspire dignity, and to inspire the essential self-fulfillment. Once we develop those attitudes, then we are standing on our own feet. But when we stand on our own feet, we don't stand on our own feet in such a way that we say that we are the only ones, there are no others.

Francis Botchway: I'm still confused. In front of the African church in Accra, I saw the huge statue of Jesus, the angels and some of the saints. They are all painted white. You go to the Catholic Church, the Episcopalian Church, and all the angels you see are white. Now, if African Christian theology is an attempt to relate Christianity to Africa and to free the African from that kind of mental domination by Euro-Christianity, the images that we see on a daily basis in the church contradict the attempts being made to Africanize Christian theology. So, I'm wondering how will you free us? My child goes to church on Sunday mornings and sees a white angel, a white Jesus, a white saint painted white, and comes back home to the Black family and I tell him: "You know, I'm trying to free you from dependence on Euro-Christianity!" How do I explain that to him?

Aloysius Lugira: This reminds me of Jomo Kenyatta's attitude when Kenya was about to attain its political independence. This attitude was once expressed in this way: "Look, we are being overtrodden; we are humiliated to the extent that if you enter church, you find all angels painted white and devils painted black. We read the Bibles, with pictures they should not have painted. So when we attain our independence, we are going to change all these things." Now my underlined word there is "when we attain our *independence.*" This independence does not simply mean when we gain power. It means that, when we are ourselves again, we shall re-shape things. In the case of that cathedral with those white statues, I think that once we get things started theoretically, then the statues can be taken to the museum and be replaced with something more fitting. That would be theologizing in Africa.

Andrew Wilson (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): Yesterday, Dr. Botchway talked about intellectuals in Africa being still very much captive to the West, because a lot of them were educated in America and Britain. He suggested that perhaps the intuitive native genius might be the real source of true African theology. I'm wondering about the African-initiated religions you mentioned. Perhaps they are the places where the most creative African theologies are being made, which will, indeed, overthrow this hidden racism that we see in the statues.

Aloysius Lugira: When you talk about the African-initiated churches, the effect is what we call "dividing the room." If you are in a town where this type of mushrooming of churches takes place, a church of five people, a church of three, and finally you get a thousand of these. You might call it ecclesiastical inflation. They are a resource to help you at least try to live seriously. They are the base of Christianity. But people get personal revelations. Then the human problems become a further division of the people and exclusiveness. So I would not take these people to be the intuitive creators of African Christian theology. But the churches are, at least, sources. They contribute something. But when someone talks about his intuitions to the extent of forgetting about study and lets "the Spirit move where it will," I think that's not the way to go. We know in Africa some places where the leaders can hardly write their names. They accomplish things probably because they have intuition; and because of intuition, they are very effective in certain areas. In certain areas, they accomplish things which even those who went to university are not able to do. But is that the kind of intuition one would think of as being the best to translate the Christian message? As soon as we talk about Christianity, of course, we have to think very much in terms of the Bible, the basis of Christianity. If the Bible is not studied, then we might as well end in hell. That is my view as far as intuition is concerned.

Andrew Wilson: In the West, one of the historical problems of Christian theology has been denominationalism, so many different denominations. One theory says it is based on the Western splitting of man into head and heart, spirit and body. But we heard yesterday that the African view of man is more holistic. I wonder, then, if African theology can develop a way of unification to overcome the denominational differences that have so hurt Western Christianity.

Aloysius Lugira: Wholeness is one of the greatest themes in our attempt towards an African Christian theology. It is great mainly because it is based on our own value of hominalistic togetherness, hominalistic way of doing things. When we say that I've got something on my mind, we say my mind and heart and soul. We do also make distinctions, but the way we make these distinctions is in such a way that it does not lead us to an individualistic way of viewing things. Traditionally speaking, in Africa we are not individualists. Then, at the same time, we know the place of an individual; when we say we are not "individualists," this should not lead one to conclude that, therefore, we are just a bloc. We are not blocs. Individuals are respected for what they are. But the communalistic ideological way of seeing things comes with a certain web that ties people together. People talk about tribes, but "tribes" is one of those words that has been so badly represented. Let us talk about the clan. The clan is a unit of individuals, but then at the same time having something of a vital nature of its own that makes these individuals to be so together, to be so close together. I'll give one example of this binding element of the clan. Yesterday I was talking to students in Indianapolis and an African student said, "Since some of us have become so acculturated in this area, they don't like to go back to Africa." I asked, "Why?" He answered, "When they get jobs, get good money, and when they think about going to Africa, then the problem that comes into their heads is this: 'When I go back, I am not going to enjoy these many rooms alone with my wife, and I have to take care of my niece and my nephew and my uncle.'" This is our type of communalism. When you get a good son, you know he is not just your son only. When I was living in an urban area, at least once a fortnight I had to go upcountry to take something for my uncle; otherwise I was a bad child. You don't get so educated as to go to the extent of forgetting those people who made you what you are. For instance, in the African way of looking at things, it would be very strange for you to pay your own son or your own daughter some money to do something in the house. What they do in the house is not a matter of rendering service. The remuneration is simply that they have done something for the family, something for the clan. That's what I mean by that web, the element which still binds people together. How would our web affect Christianity in contradistinction to what we are faced with in European denominationalism? We have also many denominations, for the time being. But you will find that many of these denominations came about as a result of following some of the theologies which were transferred to Africa with the arrival of the missionaries.

I went to a theological seminary at home, and by the time I left that seminary to go to Europe, I was thinking more in European terms than a European, tending to look down on the valuable things of African nature. It was only when I went to Freiburg and did a bit of phenomenology of religion that I realized what a fool I was. So I discovered myself as an African when I became open to a comparative study of religion.

Phillip McCracken: I was wondering if you might be able to give some idea of what you mean by African flavor in Christianity, or in Islam.

Aloysius Lugira: Maybe "African flavor" is just a metaphor for contribution, orientation, interpretation. In Christianity, that's what we may call the incarnation of the Incarnation. I mean keeping everything that is Christian, but acculturated in such a way that it yields a new whole element or a new whole entity.

Francis Botchway: It seems to me, so far, that African Christian theology aims at examining certain theological issues within their framework or the Bible, or orthodox Christianity. It seems to me, however, that you cannot speak of African Christian theology as such, but only of contributions by African colleagues or African theologians to Christian theology, simply because African Christian theology really moves within the traditional environment. So, it seems to me that the expression "African Christian theology" is really meaningless. It's very meaningless. In this sense, it would be no different from contributions by Indian scholars or Japanese scholars who are Christians and who have also contributed intellectually to the development of Christian theology. I like the way you describe African theology. That's beautiful and I think it is the right thing to do. But I don't make a distinction between "African theology" and "African Christian theology." While making this distinction, you go on to draw certain elements into African Christian theology, such as wholeness, communalism: these belong to African theology, these belong to African philosophy, African thought. You are drawing all this into your African Christian theology and, at the same time, you are making a distinction between "African theology" and "African Christian theology." It's confusion! It's all confusion! If you want to talk about African theology, then talk about African theology. And if you want to be eclectic, then say that; and preach Christian theology to African theologians and African scholars right now. But if you do that, you are going to be holding yourself to syncretism.

Aloysius Lugira: Now, my friend, this is not what we are trying to do. We are trying to find explanations to these situations. Even though you reject the term "African Christian theology," I think, in actual fact, you are trying to give an explanation of what you think African Christian theology is. I don't see any difference when you talk about the Christian African or the contribution of Christians or Africans to Christianity. African Christian theology is a contribution to Christianity. I am a Christian, but my being a Christian does not take away from me the fact that I am a Ugandan. I am a Ugandan, and probably was a Ugandan before I was a Christian, even if I was baptized as a little baby. And the dear thing is, we always go together. My being a Christian, bearing a Christian name, attending Christian services, does not make me an eclectic. What it does do to me is bring about an incarnation—of my being both a Ugandan and taking on this other thing we call Christianity. It is a question of translating the Christian life for a theologian, or a child, in a meaningful way according to their environmental circumstances. We are not aiming only at academicism or theorizing; but, we are theorizing in order to be able to come to proper practice.

Unidentified Speaker: What can African Christian theology provide that African theology cannot provide?

Aloysius Lugira: African theology does not provide Christianity's basic source, namely the Bible. That is the really distinctive element, the *Bible!* African theology is based on a set of doctrines or beliefs; and, Christian theology is based primarily on the Bible. The biblical revelation is different from the African religious revelation.

William Jones: If you conclude that the difference between African theology and African Christian theology has to do with the source, namely African Christian theology has the Bible as its primary source, then what is the African component in African Christian theology? You are now using as the source for African Christian theology something Christian, but you correctly say that the Bible is not African doctrine. I'm trying to get the distinctive African component in African Christian theology.

Aloysius Lugira: Don't forget, I referred to the Bible as the primary source.

William Jones: That means the African elements are the secondary sources that are added to what we find in the Christian scriptures. What are these distinctive African elements?

Aloysius Lugira: They're much different from the Christian source. African theology bases itself on the African religious world-view. In this African world-view we see the type of revelation some people call general revelation; although as you well know, one comes here to problems of theological control. Nevertheless, we maintain that, even before Christianity came to Africa, people knew numerous things, among which the highest was God, according to the different African ways of expressing the matter. But how did they get to that? It is that natural capacity, in particular in connection with African religion. I like to say that our people have reasoned things out and they have come to certain conclusions. Very often you find in our proverbs and in our myths the attempt to give explanation why things happen to exist. Whether we call it general revelation or a revelation based on the capacity of the individuals, I consider that to be the basic or primary source for our African religious dealings and the African theological conclusions.

Francis Botchway: I think Dr. Jones' logical question was, if you take the Bible to be the source of Christian theology and the same Bible to be the source of African Christian theology, then wherein lies the basis for the authentic component of African Christian theology?

Aloysius Lugira: Yes, this is the incarnation I'm referring to. If you are a Ghanian and a Christian, then you are a Ghanian Christian. What makes you a Ghanian? And what makes you a Christian?

William Jones: I'm saying there's something in the content of German university theology different from the content of Black theology with an accent on negritude. In the same way, it is significant to distinguish between Black theology as opposed to African theology. But if we are not getting any content difference, it seems to be a difference at the level of words only.

Aloysius Lugira: No, not just words. When we talk from the point of view of sources, as we have just been doing, I stress the African heritage, under which we get a differing worldview. When we are concentrating this distinctive African heritage and add the Bible, an incarnation of theological existence is generated; it moves me to a distinctive African Christian theology.

William Jones: Could you, then, specify some of the specifics of the African heritage which would be central components of African Christian theology but which are not elements of biblical material and the traditional Christian heritage?

Aloysius Lugira: In many cases, the African view of God is expressed in ways that denote exactly what is expressed by the Bible. But we move on to the differences. Communalism, or the community sense of feeling, in the African heritage is clearly different from the community feeling we get from the Hebrew expression. But when I take, for instance, St. Paul's words "to be all in all in Christ," that is the kind of communal sharing you will find in the African expression. If we adapt the expression to the African feeling, we generate something new but which is basically Christian. We can speak of an interpretation, or an adaptation, and the generation of a newly incarnate something; or we can call this a humanism in context.

William Jones: Should it be called African Christian theology or Christian African theology, in terms of your understanding of the primacy of source and of emphasis? Are the terms co-equal as sources or is one source pre-eminent?

Aloysius Lugira: The reason I mention Africa first is a logical one. Because to become a Christian, I already have to be an African.

Francis Botchway: The essence of what you are saying seems to attempt an African expression of Christian theology. If you base the doctrine of the church on the Bible as a source, and then you adulterate that doctrine with another system, and in the case of Africa with a non-doctrinal system, which has no record, that which you have added onto the Bible is not Christian. It's not; it's something else. Therefore, you can't classify the result as African Christian, since it is no longer Christian. In essence, you are speaking of an African expression of Christian theology in Africa, rather than African Christian theology, because the African component of your "African Christian" theology has no basis whatsoever in Christian doctrine.

Aloysius Lugira: Primarily based on the Bible—that's vital! Don't leave out "primarily," because the basis and the sources for this type of theology we are talking about is not only one base. There are several. But there is the basic one, the really most distinctive one in so far as that thing we call Christianity... You call it an "adulteration" then; I simply mean to show an example of how it becomes concrete. I don't see why I am adulterating Christianity when I become a Christian by taking on Christianity which came from somewhere and then to me.

Francis Botchway: Would you say that, instead of African Christian theology, in essence what you're talking about is the syncretic process which ultimately would lead to something different from Christian theology? So, we aren't really talking about African Christian theology, but an evolution from Christianity to something larger than Christian?

Aloysius Lugira: Christian theology is pluralistic. You may talk about it in terms of the West. You may talk of, say, St. Augustine's theology, Cyprian's theology, and so on and so on. They are all theologians and they are all different but they are all Christian. You might even talk about Marxist Christian theology. What makes you think that African Christian theology is larger than Christian? Can you clarify that?

Francis Botchway: Because I don't see how you can take African traditional values, which explain the totality of our existence, and which, according to you, have no basis in revelation, and then add that onto the Bible and call it African Christian theology. I am suggesting that these things which you take out of the African value system and those that you take out of the fundamental Christian value system can come together in a brand new thing. But that which evolves out of the two is something larger than the African and larger than what you know as Christianity. We are moving towards something higher. There has been no new religion since Islam; no other religion has come into existence for the past 1400 years. The only thing we have comparable to religion on a universal scale is Marxism. So, I think what we should be aiming at, instead of African Christian theology, is to move beyond and combine the African value systems with what Christianity has to offer.

Rather than referring to it as "African Christian," I would prefer to say Black theology.

Aloysius Lugira: Tell me. You say that since the oncoming of Christianity and Islam, we haven't had a world religion; and then you say Marxism is new—how universal is Marxism?

Francis Botchway: It's very universal. Millions and millions of people all over Eastern Europe, Russia, China, Southeast Asia—almost half the world—are under the influence of Marxism.

Aloysius Lugira: Being universal, I think, is not a matter of numbers. Marxism is not universal. Take Nyerere, for instance, one of the great Africans who is seriously engaged in studies of socialism; and then we have Senghor. But in spite of their efforts, I think you cannot categorize them as Marxist.

Francis Botchway: Senghor says, and I quote him, "I'm a Marxist-humanist, and I believe in the methods of Marxist techniques of interpretation." The only point Senghor argues against in Marxism is the negation of God and religion. Other than that, he accepts in toto the Marxist doctrine.

Aloysius Lugira: Well...that's where we are. You say he accepts the techniques. My friend, you are an African and I know how many techniques which you as an African do apply and use. Now, if you know the techniques and you tell me you are a technologist because of these techniques you use, I think you're benefiting yourself. So Senghor is not a Marxist. In spite of the fact that he makes comparative studies of socialisms and develops what he calls "African socialism," according to negritude. Nyerere is not a Marxist. But he looks at Marxist things, gets inspiration from them, and generates a new thing he calls Ujamaa. Those are the incarnations I've been talking about.

Francis Botchway: But you can't deny that all Eastern Europe is under Marxism; the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, Vietnam North and South, Cambodia, and several other countries in the world are dominated by Marxism. And, to a large extent, these societies have negated religion. What I'm saying is that for the past 1400 years, we have not had any major religion except secular religion—Marxism-Leninism. Perhaps the African scholars are not capable of comprehending what they are doing. They are attempting something much larger than themselves. And it seems to me you cannot, given your own paradigm, argue that what you are moving toward is African Christian theology.

Aloysius Lugira: It all depends on what you describe and define as African Christian theology. I think you are completely onto a new trend, and that new trend is "Let Africa come out and invent a new religion." And African Christian theologians, by using the phrase "African Christian" are explicitly telling you that they are not inventing a new religion. They are Christians, and interpreting Christianity according to the African milieu.

Francis Botchway: I'm an American and I write theology; I'm a German, and I write theology; I'm a Christian, but I don't call what I'm writing "German Christian theology" or "American Christian theology." If you are an African, writing theology, and going back to African values, indicating those values in African society which are more or less akin to values in Christianity, why call it African? Why not just go on and call it Christian theology? Why call it African?

Aloysius Lugira: When we talk theology in Africa, what do we theologize about? We may talk about Christian theology. We may also talk about Islamic theology. We can even talk about European theology in Africa; we have so many professors in African universities who are from Germany. But if they write theology based on Africa, then it's African. It is a matter of the atmosphere, a matter of the cultural heritage, a matter of attitudes and feelings—the African feeling. And while we are talking about the African feeling, then maybe we have to talk about the Ghanian feeling, and so on and so on.

Ekwueme F. Okoli: As you can talk about African philosophy as such, so we can talk about African theology. When Africans interpret God in a certain way, taking the Bible, as he says, as a point of departure, Africans have their own view, a particular interaction of the cultural perspective with the Christian faith. Religion becomes colored by the view of community in the given cultural context. Thus, when you talk about African Christian philosophy, you are talking about African interpretations of the Christian viewpoint. As words have color, so philosophical discourse has color. I think that you're correct in saying that you can say "African Christian philosophy." If you tie our African way of life to the Bible, you get a particular point of view. You get a type of synthesis between the universal African way of life and the Biblical forms different from all other Christian philosophies. But if you take the African world-views of life without trying to interpret them through the Bible, then you get yet another, different theology. That's what I understand you to say. If that is the case, I don't see why we have to quibble as to whether it is "African Christian theology" or "African theology" as such.

Warren Lewis: From the point of view of church history, there is no such thing as "Christian theology;" there are Christian theologies. There's Greek Christian theology, there's Latin Christian theology, there's Rabbinic Christian theology, which is what St. Paul was doing. There was Alexandrian-Gnostic Christian theology, and African Christian theology of the second and third centuries from the northeast corner of Africa. But there is no such thing as "Christian theology," apart from a concrete context, or, as Professor Lugira says, disincarnate. The same goes for the Bible. Somebody's reading the Bible; therefore you always have to ask the question, "Through what color of spectacles are they reading the Bible?" Are they reading the Bible through Calvin-colored glasses, Lutheran bifocals, or, like me, through Texas sunglasses? I tell you for sure, Texas theology through shades is very different from New England theology read through horn-rims! And just as there is no *pure* theology or *pure* Bible-reading, there is no such thing as "Christology;" there are Christologies. The Christology of Calvin is different from the Christology of Servetus. The Christology of Mark is different from the Christology of John. Therefore, if we are going to talk about African Christian theology, it seems to me just a semantic quibble whether we say "African Christian" or "Christian African." You can have it either way you want it. But what counts is to realize that when an African does Christian theology, it's going to look different from when a Greek or a Latin or a German or a Texan does it.

William Jones: No, what I'm getting at is a fundamental difference between "African Christian" theology or "Christian African" theology, depending on which one you give pre-eminence to. It has to do with what you take as your basic source, and that means your concept of authority as well as what you accept as normative. It's one thing to take the African world-view as your source or norm, and put it through the Christian prism. The substance is African, though the form is Christian. But if you take the Bible as your source and read it as an African, then that is "African Christian theology," substantially Christian, but with an African form. But "African theology" is something quite different. I don't see how you could do African theology and make a Christian base be its source.

Aloysius Lugira: We were first all born in a certain place before we became a Christian; so, we are already acculturated to a certain way of life. When we then tackle the Bible, we tackle it from a point of view which is colored by our way of life. You produce a second interpretation, which is not mine, but a different type of interpretation which takes as its point of departure two poles: one is the norms of the culture in which you were born, and the other is the written documents you have received through the Christian prism. Just as your culture is different from mine, so the refractions you see through the prism are different; and this will mean a different interpretation.

William Jones: If I go to the Christian Bible as source, as opposed to the proverbs and myths of African traditional religion, I'm talking about two different entities. What you seem to mean by "African Christian" theology is that there are two sources, neither one of which is pre-eminent. How do you then adjudicate, if you're coming from two different sources, when there is disagreement or non-identity between them?

Warren Lewis: You have to admit that you have two equal sources, do you not?

Kwame Gyekye: Two co-equal sources; neither is pre-eminent. But *are* the sources co-equal in the thinking of a theologian? Are proverbs from Africa, the pithy sayings and the myths, accepted as co-equal when compared to the Bible?

Aloysius Lugira: You will not make an African Christian theology without them. They are the *sine qua non,* if you are talking about African Christian theology. But I want to answer the church historian's question. Yes, according to church history, we may agree; we know there are many theologies. But we are also entitled to talk about "theology." Otherwise we would never talk about theology in the singular.

Warren Lewis: I don't think we can. Show me "theology." Point it out. There is no such thing as Christian theology; there are Christian theologies.

Aloysius Lugira: There are Christian theologies, but they fall under the general discipline of "theology."

William Jones: If you go out on a scavenger hunt to find theology, you won't find flowers. You might bring me some words.

Aloysius Lugira: Theology is theology...

Warren Lewis: But the theologies are mutually exclusive; therefore you can't take them all at once. You can't be an Arian and an Athanasian at the same time, and they were both Africans.

Aloysius Lugira: But they were both theologies. Ergo: theology.

Warren Lewis: In the platonic sense, perhaps. But you can't describe "theology" per se. You can only describe concrete—as you say, incarnate—theologies. "Theology" exists only as a logical distinction.

Aloysius Lugira: After all, these are merely logical distinctions.

Warren Lewis: Oh no, there is a very important sociological distinction. We never have theology "disincarnate," to use your word. I'm on *your* side on this. (Laughter)

Aloysius Lugira: That's what I want you to say! (Laughter)

Warren Lewis: Kwame's question is important. You can have African theology with no Christian component; Africans who've never heard of Jesus Christ or the Bible could talk about God. That would be "African theology." You can have African Muslim theology. You can have African Anthroposophic theology. You can have African Anything theology, if an African is doing it and drawing on their traditional heritage as sources.

William Jones: And that's my point: since you can have African theology without a Christian component, you can have African theology *with* a Christian component. It makes sense to distinguish between Christian African theology or African Christian theology, depending on which is dominant.

Gentlemen, this is a very stimulating conversation. But there are some of us who have to catch planes. Shall we adjourn and continue the discussion informally?

BRISTOL

THE SECOND CONFERENCE
ORARY AFRICAN
ONS
SITY OF BRISTO

Conference Convener, Dr. Irving Hexham, with David S.C.Kim, President of the Unification Theological Seminary.

Conference participants engage in discussion.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND CONFERENCE ON CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN RELIGION

Sunday Evening Session
September 3, 1978

Irving Hexham, of Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., convened the conference with a number of informal, personal remarks. This was followed with a brief, roundtable self-introduction by each of the participants. Then, Irving asked Warren Lewis to comment on the purpose of the conference.

Warren Lewis (Professor of Church History, Unification Theological Seminary): I'll continue in this autobiographical vein for a while. When I crawled in off the dry, dusty plains of West Texas as a fundamentalist Christian, I was convinced that all but my own kind were unquestionably on the road to an uncomfortable hell because they hadn't been baptized as a believing adult in a lot of water by one of our preachers. Then, I reached the oasis of Harvard Divinity School, turned left, and struggled on from there back into the Middle Ages at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto. Finally, I swam upstream, to the source of all European religious truth, both Catholic and Protestant, the University of Tübingen. Gradually, a piece at a time, I have been sensitized to the pluralistic reality of religion in our world.

I suppose I have become a multi-dimensional polytheist. The essential question for me was truth or not truth. Like most everyone else, I occupied my intellectual position because I thought it was right. Had I thought it was wrong, I would have abandoned it. But then I came to see that either my position was the correct one, which then excluded all but about three million people from God's ultimate care, or everybody's point of view is right somehow, someway. So, I decided to become a radical pluralist, and thanks to Lonnie Kliever at SMU, a polytheist. I agree with Tolkien and believe in dragons and hobbits. I say "Hare Krishna" whenever I am asked to make a contribution. I work loyally for the Rev. Moon and am an Evangelical Christian who names Jesus "Lord."

In addition to all that warm piety, I also learned something about the world from an academic point of view. Most of the people I have met in my religious, academic pilgrimage, whose perceptions I most deeply appreciate, are, in their own perspective, pluralists too. From whichever island they started their pilgrimage, and to the many islands they have hopped along the way, they, too, see it as a pluralistic world. That's the common wisdom now, isn't it? "Pluralism" is a word on every academic tongue and on an increasing number of religious tongues. When it shall come to a time of making a statement of faith about the global future, just a lot of us have to believe it's going to be an international, trans-cultural statement.

I am not one of those people who thinks you can sit down and plot out the religion of the future. Religion is determined by a complex of psycho-sociological factors. We can no more plan it here, in Bristol, than we can in the future Global Congress of all the world's religions which we are proposing. It will be whatever it will be. Whether you talk about the unavoidable destiny of the human race running its bumpy road through history, or God's providence and the eschatological timetable, or if you believe in the hominization of the noosphere as we strive towards the Omega point, or if you are just dazzled by the dawning of the Age of Aquarius and the imminence of the Year 2000 and what that has to mean, then we are all in a common wash together, aren't we? That is what this meeting is about.

This same reality brought together last Thanksgiving in San Francisco a room full of Nobel laureates, theologians, philosphers, and natural scientists of distinction to discuss a topic similar to the one we are discussing here this weekend. In San Francisco, we asked the question: How can we plan and bring to pass a Global Congress of the World Religions? Is it a good idea? Would it serve the needs of humanity? Is it in the will of God (the Gods)? Who is willing to help? Where do we go from here? The response was overwhelmingly positive. I continue to get mail, weekly, as a result of that conference—people making suggestions; offering their services; raising dire warnings, but then going on to affirm the plan, if only their comments are observed. I am now absolutely committed to the idea of a Global Congress of World Religions. As a result of the input from this world-wide communication in which I find myself involved, I am convinced that it is an idea whose time is just about to come.

But someone said, "The Unificationists are the 'johnnies-come-lately' in a field already very full of folk. Why do they think we need another new religion to unify the religions or another institution to bring about what numerous institutions have already attempted and failed?" I think that is a fair question. My Unification colleagues and I have deliberated upon it. We are content to describe ourselves as midwives— an institutional midwife present at the birth, facilitating and helping in whatever way we can, but under no delusion that we, ourselves, are creating what we are attending or that we can do it alone, without the help of other midwives. We are therefore presently planning a "conference of groups," to bring together many of these different interest groups involved in inter-religious, global ecumenics. The Conference of the Groups will enable them to hear from one another what the particulars of their several kinds of work are. I took high tea at the Upper Swainswick Rectory this afternoon with Marcus Braybrooke, the general director of the World Congress of Faiths. As has been the case in similar situations with groups in America, India, and elsewhere, we found considerable common ground with one another. I can prophesy already that we will be making plans together.

One line of development thus leads through a Conference of the Groups towards a Global Congress of the world's religions. As a historian of the Christian church, I would rather like to describe this congress, as I envision it, as the first truly ecumenical council of the whole church—one at which the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Rome, and his holiness, the Dalai Lama, and whoever is the head of the village from which friend Kwame came in Ghana, could sit down in full collegiality to deliberate as equals on the future of our global tribe. In full fellowship, they would interpret for us all that the Gods are saying about reality and life and our common futures.

But it shouldn't be just another religious get-together of the bishops and the preachers! As an academic, I have realized that the heart without the head misfires, just as surely as I know, as a religionist, that the head without the heart shrivels. Our ideal includes the perhaps impossible notion that we will have the academics and the gurus sit down together. The Rev. Moon insists that the academics be there. I can see why he could say that, as a guru. Gurus are often not interested in the competition of other gurus, but presumably might get along better with the academics. He is insistent that the academics be there—even the freelance, relativist, reductionist ones without particular religious affiliation—

because he has a very deep appreciation for the academic study of religion. This of course parallels his interests as expressed in the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, another of his gifts to the world. We are insisting that head and heart be held together. We do foresee that those religious hearts will communicate with those intellectual heads and that the result will be whole, saner and more healthy for it.

The other line of development, which has grown out of our deliberations and conferences, came by way of the Barrytown Conference on Contemporary African Religion. There, we made a discovery that has brought us to you seeking wisdom and advice. And, once again in my midwife capacity, I am happy to facilitate on this occasion a similar discussion. We are here to ask you if you think Africa, and a congress of the religions in Africa, is not the proper major stepping stone towards a Global Congress? We think Africa is the right place at the right time to crystalize this world-wide interest.

Why Africa? From our perspective, Africa seems to be the place where it is happening, religiously speaking: where the religions are unifying and where something good, not only for Africa but for the rest of us as well, might come to pass. The autochthonous religions of Africa, present from time out of mind, now face indigenized Christianity, Islam, and other important religions. But the impact of Western technological culture is such that the fragile ecosystems of the traditional religions of Africa are being destroyed. If our generation does not preserve at least a literary memory of African religions, they, in their pure form, will shortly become a chapter in the histories of religion, like other autochthonous, ancient religions which are no longer extant. We thus have a double purpose with, as it seems, mutually exclusive ends: at once to facilitate the good health of African religion and, at the same time, to participate in the unification process going on there among the religions.

Another reason for Africa, in terms of what James Dickie generously said a moment ago, is that we don't know anything about Africa. That's not true of James, of course, nor of yourselves. You are the people who do know. But except for yourselves and a few others like you, Africa has been theologically avoided for a number of reasons. Thanks, however, to new directions in American Black Studies—the Africans of the Diaspora—we are beginning to pay closer cultural and theological attention to the religious riches of Africa.

Yet another reason for our concern, whether or not you happen to agree that a Communist takeover in Pan-Africa is a threat, is admittedly political: we see a common cause of the world's religions, including Africa's, as strategic ground upon which to take a unified stand against all forms of totalitarianism, whether political or religious, communist or fascist.

Finally, a theological reason why the Unification Church is interested in Africa relates to the particular religious perspectives of Mr. Moon himself. As you can read in a chapter I contributed to the recently-published book, *A Time for Consideration,* the first academic appraisal of the Unification movement (which you may take free of charge from the literature table at the back of the room), Mr. Moon, among other things, is something of a Korean shaman; if you want to understand him and his movement, you have to know something about Korean primal religion. But because he brings that religious experience with him, he has an innate capacity to understand the autochthonous religions of Africa. When he arrived in the United States, sensitive to the depth of connection between the Orient and native Americans, he addressed himself to the American Indians as "cousins." At a pre-verbal level a number of the Korean leaders of the Unification Church seem to understand African primal religion in a way I simply do not. You will be interested to know that the Kimbanguists have sent a delegation to the Unificationists to initiate exploratory talks. I have no idea what will come of that, but it fascinates me. At any rate, it seems altogether appropriate that Mr. Moon be your host, as it were, on this African occasion.

Over the next two days we will have three conversations going at once. Tomorrow's academic discussion, as outlined in your programme, will allow us to hear from Fred Welbourn and Myrtle Langley, as well as Kwame Gyekye, on African religion. Tomorrow afternoon, Irving, standing in for Terence Ranger, is to lead us in a structured discussion on methodology in the study of African religion. Our academic program for this conference should prove enjoyable in and of itself. Our second conversation, running coterminous with the first, revolves around the question, "Shall we hold a congress of African religions in Africa?" If we do, how shall we go about doing it? How can we focus the attention of the scholarly and religious community upon Africa and African religions in a way that will be beneficial for Africa and for the rest of the world? Our third conversation, of course is the one about the Global Congress. Do you think it a good idea? How do we get there from here? What benefits might accrue from it? And the pressing question for us of the Unification Seminary: how do we attain the collegiality of co-sponsorship necessary for an event of this scope?

There is precedent for what we aim to do. In 1893, the Victorians gathered optimistically in Chicago at the glorious Columbian exposition taking place there. In retrospect, some people say it was another attempted coup for the "hidden Christian missionary agenda." On the other hand, others say it was the first time the Christian West clearly heard the voice of the Orient when the Hindu Vivekenanda stood up and told us to stop yammering about sin so much. Again in 1936, another great movement was precipitated by Francis Younghusband in the World Congress of the Faiths, which will have its annual meeting in York next weekend. This body of people is interested not so much in flashy conferences one attends once and then forgets, but, in a longer-term, educational involvement, wherein one feels a personal responsibility for inventive, inter-religious dialogue. We now, therefore, propose an event for 1981 which will build on what has gone before. Hopefully, the efforts of all those groups who are interested and willing can combine to convoke a congress that will attain a new level, and a new religious statement of the reality of the emerging global culture. That global reality is on its way, and we'd best take hold of it, it seems to me, in full responsibility and full of humility, to bring it about in a way that is humane, lest it come about in some way that is not.

Irving Hexham (Professor of Religious Studies, Regent College, Vancouver B.C.): I'm intrigued by this because as you probably all realize, this meeting has been organized by an independent church. If it were Kimbanguists, we might feel differently; but it's a Korean, independent church, with a conference on Africa, bringing together European, American, Canadian and African academics. I find all that a very strange thing in itself, and very interesting. Another intriguing thing is the possibility not only for dialogue but for real disagreements. When I said that people came because of friendships, I should also say that some people have not arrived who would have liked to have come, and this wouldn't always have been for friendship. In particular, I invited Jan Knappert who would disagree very strongly indeed with James, here, on Islam. And Terry Ranger, if he had not been booked with his family for Iona this week, would have very provocative things to say, as usual, on methodology. There is the possibility here, I think, of disagreement as well as agreement; and this is something very important in the study and discussion of religion. Now, over to the floor, I think, at this point.

Eileen Barker (Sociologist at London School of Economics): Can you just briefly give me an idea what you mean by the unification of world religions?

Warren Lewis: What I mean, or what Mr. Moon means, or what this global congress might put forward?

Eileen Barker: What you mean.

Warren Lewis: I have decided, at least in terms of how they are perceived, that the Gods are there. Pondering the question with a Biblical orientation, from a Christian background, I have to accommodate my neo-polytheism with our traditional philosophical monotheism. I'm able to do this on the basis of the protognosticizing epistles of pseudonymous Paul, Ephesians and Colossians, where we are told that our Lord's resurrected body comprises the aeons, the thrones and dominations, and the principalities and powers. St. Paul was talking about the heavenly "hosts," or in the language of Greece and India, he was talking about the other Gods. It's the same worldview you have in Deuteronomy, where it says the Lord God has appointed over each area of the earth an angelic watcher. And you have it again in Daniel, where each nation is said to have its divine guardian. Michael cares for Israel; Persia has its lord among the Elohim; and, I presume, so do India, Greece, Africa and Asia.

The ancient Jews were not philosophical monotheists, the way we Aristotelian Christians have thought; they were "henotheists"—believers that, among the many Gods, there was One who is the High God—"but the Lord God is Lord of lords, and God of the gods." Having resurrected these concepts out of my Grandpa's Texas Bible, I've decided to be a polytheist, and believe that the angels or the Olympians or that wonderful host of heavenly entities the Hindus worship, they're all really there. As one of your own poets has said:

> We were talking of dragons, Tolkien and I,
> in a Berkshire bar. The big workman
> who had sat silent and sucked his pipe
> all the evening, from his empty mug
> with gleaming eye glanced towards us;
> "I seen 'em myself," he said fiercely.

I believe in dragons and hobbits, Krishna and Moon, and Jesus Christ our Lord who was raised from the dead on the third day, though, unlike the big Berkshire workman and his dragons, I ain't seen 'em all myself. When one begins from that radically pluralistic, polytheistic point of view, one does not foresee a time when one religion will dominate over the others. Unless the angels which inspire the other religions cease to exist, their religions will not cease to exist. Nor do I foresee that the Creator, who rejoiced in their beginning, will plot their ending and is going to abolish the heavenly hosts.

This curious variegation of religion, which we sociologists observe around us on earth, I as a theologian see reflected in the heavenly spheres as separate entities. For me then, unification of world religions is the simple recognition, celebration, and enjoyment of the proper functional part which each of the religions plays in the cosmic corporateness of the body of Christ, our resurrected Lord. Moses gave us the law, and the Buddha taught us enlightenment, but Jesus offers us neither the law nor enlightenment. But if I'm to have enlightenment and law, then I need Moses and Buddha. Jesus is the Savior of my soul, Muhammad is my Prophet of transcendence, and Confucius is our wise man on the subject of propriety in social relationships. Neither Confucius nor Muhammad offers me what my Lord Jesus Christ offers me through his blood, his cross, and his glorious resurrection. But, neither does he offer me what Confucius teaches us, nor what Allah told Muhammad to remind us of.

These organs, members, and parts of the cosmic body of God, when they properly function together, secure for us enlightenment from one direction, soul-salvation from another, a basis for society from a third, a permanent iconoclasm from yet another when our idols weigh us down; and—I hold—it's all the graciousness of the Lord Krishna.

Now I'll just pass this stinger on the end, the main thing I've learned from the Reverend Moon on this subject: In his function as the head shaman for the Unification Church, he tells the story of his clairvoyant travels in the spirit world. Once he hosted all the heads of the world's religions to a messianic banquet. There, as his guests, they sat down—with him engineering the conversation—and agreed, it's time their followers on earth established peace amongst themselves. Then, Mr. Moon tells us, there, in the spirit world, Jesus and Confucius and Buddha and Muhammad and the other high ones agreed that the time of the wars of religion is over, and that we earthlings ought to get busy, following their lead, with our side of it.

Irving Hexham: Well, Warren took half an hour to tell you what it's all about, and a quarter of an hour to answer one question.

Warren Lewis: I'll not do that again! But she did ask me the one question that could've gotten a sermon.

Irving Hexham: It was a fairly good sermon. I'm sure there must be other questions.

Fred Welbourn (Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Bristol): Yes, my problem with this, theologically, is that you've said an awful lot about the hosts of heaven; but you can have the hosts of heaven without God. It doesn't seem to me that you've said much about Yahweh. Is He so great, so mysterious, and so dangerous that you dare not name His name? Like "Modeemo" of Stanley Mogoba's people, who, exactly the same, had a religion of the heavens, in which you daren't even point a finger at the heavens. This unique thing, which isn't part of the hosts of heaven...well, I can't talk about it! It is just quite awful. And it doesn't seem to me you've said a word about this. Not that you shouldn't like to talk about religion, but, if you're talking about religion, then I'm not interested in religion.

Warren Lewis: You're interested in God.

Fred Welbourn: I'm interested in God, yes.

Warren Lewis: Somewhere along the line I hope I did say God created them all, and set them, each one, over their proper place. I worship him as the Creator of it all; but, as you say, it's too terrible to talk about. So that's why we talk about religion.

Fred Welbourn: Well, why bother about religions, you see?

Harold Turner (Director, Project for the Study of New Religious Movements in Primal Societies, Aberdeen University): An awful lot of people seem to bother about religions.

James Dickie (Instructor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Lancaster): Religion is the only way you can know the unknowable.

Irving Hexham: Would you say that all religions lead to the unknowable?

James Dickie: In their several ways, yes. But the reason we talk about religions is because it's the only way of knowing the unknowable. It's as simple as that. At least in Islamic theology, God cannot be known in Himself. He is the inexpressible mystery. He can only be known through His names, His attributes—the attributes which He ascribes to Himself, and which we recognize through their presence in the phenomenal world. If it were not for these attributes, what you would have is an agnostic God. But the essence, the quiddity, of God is totally unknowable to a being such as man, whom He so totally transcends. You're going to find a great deal of difficulty involving the Muslims in this project, I feel; so I'm glad you've invited one like myself with no official status, and that you've therefore nothing to lose.

Kurt Johnson (Biologist, City University of New York; Committee member 'Church and Social Action'): A week ago I was at a conference on emergent minority direction in the United States.

All the people in attendance were social leaders, many high in government positions; they were also all ministers, mostly all Black people or Mexican-Americans. They brought up the fundamental point worth making here: Black people, or anyone who's suffered, knows, better than anyone else, that Mr. Say is nobody, but Mr. Do is the man.

Whatever comes of the Congress of World Religions must meet the challenge of what, to me, is the meaning of the Incarnation: How do we get from our nice ideas of God to a world of which we and God can be proud? We find it impossible even to deal with the bloc in Harlem, and we're young and we're the only ones working there because everyone else has given up.

These problems not only exist and have to be dealt with by religious responsibility, but they're the very problems that can explode the world. Because so many think that religion is irrelevant to any solution, we go to politics, anarchism, and in any other direction for answers. If a global congress of world religions were to become a political lobbying body, a conscience that shouts loudly through the media when there is a need, that would be something; but much more substantial things need to be accomplished, also, which are complicated and vast.

Eileen Barker: From what you're saying, Warren, you seem to be positing some ontological reality which comprises many parts of that which cannot be named—God. But with you Unificationists, how do you balance, join, get together, know how all these different aspects of reality fit, so that they function for the different people? You keep saying sociological things: I must presume you understand that each aspect functions and dysfunctions for each particular group. How do you practically go about bringing in what is missing for one lot, allowing people to have their own language, their own myths, allowing them to see beyond, to transcend themselves.

Warren Lewis: That's the question, isn't it? But the "how" question is one for which I have no answer, yet. For one example, the World Congress of Faiths is hosting a trip to India. But as I contemplate something similar we might do in Africa, I shudder to think what our Africa congress might look like were it to turn out to be only fancy tourism. But how do we get beyond that to something more substantial?

Eileen Barker: Are you going to discuss that in detail tomorrow? The Barrytown conference seemed to me to be very, very naive and superficial on the idea of how one would act if we went to Africa.

Warren Lewis: That's one of the main things I hope we will talk about tomorrow.

Eileen Barker: If the methodological "how" is missing, tell me about a theological "how." It is a question that is implicitly posited as soon as you make an ontological affirmation.

Warren Lewis: I can tell you how Reverend Moon has done it, and this is why he fascinates a church historian such as myself. Here, for the first time, as far as I can tell, in the history of Christian thought, an Oriental mind and heart has comprehended the Christian Gospel and reissued it in Oriental thought-forms and categories. St. Thomas did it with Aristotelianism, Augustine did it with Neo-Platonism, the Greek fathers did it with Greek philosophy, St. Paul did it with Pharisaic rabbinics. And now, Sun Myung Moon has done it with Oriental thought, and very successfully, I think, in terms of a system of theology. So that's one model. Then, there's the model we have nowadays of the New Age, New Consciousness—the "Berkeley crowd."

Eileen Barker: But if you're going to unify the unifiers, it does not follow that the "Age of Aquarius" is equivalent to the "noosphere," which is not equivalent to the "Divine Principle." There are very important differences in theosophies, eschatologies and so forth. And again, once you start looking for unification, there is almost immediately the danger of exclusiveness through your pluralism, which is self-defeating. Yet you must face the initial necessity to exclude the excluder, which is an obvious philosophical problem.

Warren Lewis: Except he tends to exclude himself, doesn't he? I don't have to exclude him if he chooses not to come; but because I would be happy for him to be there and yell his head off... He could be a thorn in our side, if he wanted to, couldn't he? It's a highly functional role to be played.

Eileen Barker: Now you're just talking functionally, not ontologically.

Warren Lewis: Oh, I thought you wanted a functional answer this time, rather than an ontological one.

Eileen Barker: What I'm wanting is recognition of the problem of unifying all these at the theological level. It is more than just an epistemological problem you are trying to overcome.

Warren Lewis: I think I see your question, at last. I've raised the issue with my Unificationist colleagues as to whether we want to invite the Marxists to the Global Congress. As you know, Reverend Moon is virulently anti-Communist, and if you know something about his history, you know why. (It's perfectly understandable, from a human point of view; but he's ideologically anti-Communist, too.) So the question arises, shall we have the Marxists there? I insist we must.

The issue now will be, can they come on their own terms to a gathering like this and participate freely? Theologically, I think that they can be there for the same reason I would want Moon to be there; I see them both as stimulating heretics. They represent to me a creative heresy within the Jewish-Christian tradition, similar to the Christian heresy, Islam, of the seventh century, which preserves an ancient Christology more faithful to the Gospel in some ways than certain Chalcedonian developments and upholds the Semitic sense of God's transcendence better than the neoplatonizing Greek Christians were able to do. In the gift book we have for you, I have a second chapter in which I ask the question, "Is the Reverend Sun Myung Moon a heretic?" And, of course, he is. I develop there an ontology of heresy: heresy and orthodoxy exist in yin—yang symbiosis where, in order to have orthodoxy, you've got to have heresy, and in order to have heresy, obviously, you have to have orthodoxy. So, I want all of the oppositions there, for the sake of the whole.

That's my theological answer, Eileen, though I don't know if it's an adequate one. I come from a religiously sectarian background where we were always excluded, either by the others or because we ourselves would not come to the theological parties. I've drunk the wine of no-communion to the dregs and I know that's not the way *I* want to go. Because nobody would ever listen to *us, your* theology was not perfected in the way that it might have been, if you'd have taken us seriously; not to mention what we would have gained had we listened to you. Now, I'm in the position of writing out a guest list for a theological tea party, and I want, for the sake of wholeness, everyone to be invited.

Myrtle Langley (Lecturer at Trinity Theological College, Stoke Hill, Bristol): Do you need to define your "wholeness" then? You've got physical categories, social categories, also theological categories here, all in one, mixed together. You may have a whole there in one sense, but exclusion in another.

Warren Lewis: Let's keep talking about the Marxists, then. They're the outstanding contemporary heretics from many Christian points of view. By "Marxists" I mean the rugged ones, the really totalitarian ones, that give us bad political dreams. I'm not particularly anti-Communist, but I *am* anti-totalitarianism, whether it's on the right or on the left. Some of the leading Marxist communists were infinitely more blood thirsty on all counts than Hitler was—Stalin, Mao, for two. And yet, what, minimally, are they saying? Now I quote Reverend Moon: these communists are an accusation against the Christian world of the "failure of Christianity" to establish on earth an equitable economic social order. Therefore, they need to arrive at the Global Congress to make their prophetic claims against us.

Kurt Johnson: One other aspect you might find interesting from our experience with social-action conferences in the United States is that even if you bring a group together that would seem incredibly contradictory in its pluralism, what happens then is that you tend to get a victory of what I consider the real Incarnation: the victory of "heart," where people decide that they're going to do something in spite of all the doctrinal differences. People realize they're made of heart, as well as of opinion; that they're people of direction and they want to show they can do something.

As we work along, people fall away from the group; then that group becomes a new group, which goes on to do something. I think this is why you're wise, Warren, to hold this "group of groups" conference, because, whatever you do as a conference, your connection to other organized groups becomes your feet on the ground. Something coming afterwards that is real and good for mankind depends on the organizations that are connected to your vision.

Irving Hexham: I think that might be a good note on which to adjourn. I'm not quite clear what the Unification Church really wants or what Warren wants. It does seem to provide an interesting opportunity for discussion, which I enjoy.

MONDAY MORNING SESSION
September 4, 1978

THE UNITIVE ELEMENTS IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHIES AND THEOLOGIES
Dr. Kwame Gyekye

In a critical discussion of Dr. John S. Mbiti's book, *African Religions and Philosophy,* published a few years ago, I accused Dr. Mbiti of "unsupported generalizations, oversimplifications, premature judgements, and sparse analysis." Mbiti, in his book, recognizes the diversity of religious beliefs and practices in Africa, and so speaks of African "religions" in the title of his book. In his use of the singular "philosophy," he means, perhaps, to convey the impression that Africans have a common philosophical perspective, although he himself speaks of "philosophical systems of different African peoples."

Mbiti writes: "Since there are no parallel philosophical systems which can be observed in singularly concrete terms and similarly concrete terms, we shall use the singular, 'philosophy,' to refer to the philosophical understanding of African peoples concerning different issues of life." This statement invites two responses: The first is that the "philosophical understanding of African peoples concerning different issues of life" cannot be assumed to be similar or uniform until the philosophical contours of various African peoples have been plotted and delineated, or, failing that, unless certain integrations are given which can reasonably ground the legitimacy or possibility of such a similarity in the African philosophical orientation.

My second response is that the view, "there are no parallel philosophical systems which can be observed," can hardly be taken when one knows, as Mbiti does, that "the philosophical systems of different African peoples" has not yet been formulated, unless one asks a writer to indicate the possibility or necessity of such a similarity in the African philosophical perspective. Mbiti, however, provides no rational grounds on which his views can be anchored, hence the accusations of premature judgement and sparse analysis.

As for the accusations of unwarranted generalizations, I may just cite two examples from Mbiti's book, namely, his well-known views about the so-called "African concept of time," and his views on the nature of moral evil in African thought. Mbiti maintains that African peoples conceive time to be a "two-dimensional phenomenon, with a long past, a present, and virtually no future." The linear concept in Western thought, with an infinite past, present, and infinite future, is, he says, foreign to African thinking.

He says that he has reached this conclusion by a study of the verb tenses of some East African languages. According to Mbiti, the three verb tenses which refer to the future, cover a period of about six months, or not beyond two years at the most. Coming events, he says, have to fall within the range of these verb tenses; otherwise, such events lie beyond the horizon of what constitutes actual time.

Although my intention now is not to controvert specific conclusions in Mbiti's book, having done so in an earlier publication, I wish merely to point out that Mbiti himself is aware that all African peoples have the conception of an infinite being, that is, the Supreme Being. And although infinity is here ascribed to a being, and not to time, it may be implied, of course, that a concept of an infinite time is already involved, in that an infinite being necessarily logically dwells in an infinite time; otherwise, the infinite being would be limited by time, and would therefore not be infinite.

But be that as it may, my immediate difficulty is with Mbiti's precipitate generalization of a concept for the rest of African peoples analysed within the context of just a handful of local African languages. He admits that, "Languages are the key to the serious research and understanding of traditional religions and philosophy." Languages, indeed, are vestibules into the conceptual world. But this indicates simply a concept formulated on the basis of different languages to produce similar or quite similar conclusions.

I am asserting that the similarity or near similarity of such conclusions cannot be assumed *a priori,* that is, antecedental to the examination of the conclusions of other languages. Thus, for the moment, I am not so much concerned with the correctness of Mbiti's views about what he calls "the African concept of time," as with the basis of his generalizing his analysis for the rest of African peoples.

Another questionable statement Mbiti makes concerns the nature of moral evil in African thought. He says: "In African communities, something is considered evil not because of its intrinsic nature, but by virtue of who does it to whom, and from which level of status." Although the view is controvertible, and I have controverted it elsewhere, my difficulty here, as before, concerns the ground for generalizing it for the rest of African peoples, even if it were true of his own ethnic group.

However, in fairness to Mbiti, I must say that his chapters on the nature, works, and worship of God in African religious thought, as well as the chapter on spiritual being, are elegant and admirable. In these chapters he pulls together in an ingenious way what African peoples in general think and say about God and spiritual being, as can be gleaned from written sources.

Now, I must make it clear that I am not accusing Mbiti of "generalization"; indeed, a great deal of human reasoning is based ultimately on generalization, since most of the premises of deductive reasoning are inductively reached. But I was and am accusing him of "unsupported generalization." My intention in criticizing him some time ago, as now, was not to deny the legitimacy of an authentic African philosophy (using "philosophy" in the singular), but to question the basis of some of his bold, generalized assertions about African thought.

Mbiti's theses, or at any rate, the controversial ones, in my view, lack the necessary scientific or rational fortifications. If one supposes that the philosophical understanding of the various African peoples concerning different issues of life is uniform or similar, then it is one's task to provide rational justification for his supposition. I myself think we can possibly speak of African philosophy, or perhaps better, we can discern across the board some common features of the traditional life and thought of African peoples which can constitute a legitimate, reasonable basis for the construction of African philosophical thought, in the same way we speak of Western, Soviet, or Oriental philosophical thought. The examination of the basis of such a possibility or legitimacy is the burden of this paper.

The basis I have in mind is constituted by the beliefs, customs, traditions, values, socio-political institutions, and the historical experiences of African societies. It is such factors or elements which make up the material fabric of an authentic African philosophy. This observation of mine will immediately evoke cynicism in scholars on African cultures, particularly non-African scholars, who do not hesitate, and are, in fact, given to harping on the diversities of the cultures of Africa; neither do they look for the unitive factors. It seems to me that it is intellectually futile, however, to spend one's effort in pointing out the fact of cultural pluralism in Africa, for that fact is so obvious. It is a consequence of ethnic pluralism in Africa.

On the intellectual level, the works of such eminent and respectable Western anthropologists as Rattray, Herskovits, Daryll Forde, Meyer Fortes, Evans-Pritchard, Radcliffe-Brown, Lienhardt, and others, which dealt generally with specific ethnic groups in Africa, have produced the impression, not at all intended by these authors, that the cultural institutions and practices of one ethnic group in Africa were different from the others. The reason is that, in general, none of these great authors, either through the lack of interest in other ethnic groups or consciousness of his own limitations, tried in any noticeable or purposive manner to relate his own observations or conclusions to those of another scholar, where they were available. The comparisons one may stumble upon in their works were few and far between and were usually made in passing, as they were considered merely tangential to the structure of the work. The great works of such individual Africanists did not provide the opportunity for making a synoptic study of African cultures; consequently, such works failed to convey the impression or idea that African cultures can be examined from their continental perspective.

In this connection, works such as *African Worlds,* edited by Daryll Forde (1954) and *African Political Systems,* edited by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940), both of which focus on specific themes, (the former on the cosmological ideas and social values of a number of African peoples, the latter on the traditional political systems of some African societies) are of immeasurable value. They provide one with a horizontal conspectus of the cultural systems of several African peoples. Others, like Geoffrey Parrinder, cover the whole of Africa, or one big region of it, in one sweep, an approach that may have didactic advantages, even though it may leave out some important details and could lead to superficiality if not properly handled. However, it is incumbent on the one who wants to offer a considered opinion on the general nature of African cultures to make comparative investigations, relating one cultural system to the other.

A painstaking comparative study of what scholars have written on African culture leaves one in no doubt that, despite the cultural diversities that arise out of Africa's ethnic pluralism, one does perceive threads of underlying affinities running through them. One perceives common features as one examines the beliefs, customs, values, socio-political values and ideas, proverbs, myths, folktales, and so on, of the various ethnic components of African society. Thus Daryll Forde wrote in the introduction to his collection of essays on social, religious and cosmological ideas of several ethnic groups in Africa: "When these studies are considered together, one is impressed not only by the great diversity of ritual forms and expressions of belief but also by substantial underlying similarities in religious outlook and moral injunction." Later he speaks of "the religious ideas and social values which are widespread in Africa."

In an introduction to a similar collection of studies on the political systems of the different African peoples, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard opined that, "the societies described here are representative of common types of African political organizations," and that "all the major principles of African political organizations are brought out in these essays." They added: "Most of the forms described here are variants of a pattern of political organizations found among contiguous or neighbouring societies, so that this book covers, by implication, a very large part of Africa."

I myself think that quite a number of Africa's ethnic groups are so small, and consequently their cultures have been so greatly influenced by those of the larger neighbouring ethnic groups, that the cultures of such small ethnic groups may be said to have merged, to a great extent, with those of the large groups. Recently, the eminent Ghanian sociologist, who died a week ago in Oxford, K.A. Buzia, also wrote: "It is recognized that there are many different communities in Africa with different historical experiences, cultures, and religions. But from such studies as have already been done on the religious beliefs and rites of different communities, it is possible to discern common religious ideas and assumptions about the universe felt throughout Africa which provide a worldview that may be described as African."

All this justifies the assertion that ethnicity does not necessarily or invariably produce absolute verticalism in cultures, making no room for horizontal shoulder-rubbing of any kind, and producing windowless monads of cultural systems. One of the major causes of political instability in modern African nations is not, in my opinion, cultural pluralism or even ethnocentrism, but fear on the part of one ethnic group of political–not cultural–domination by the other group or groups, I have never read or heard of a leader of an ethnic group in an African nation expressing fears of cultural domination or assimilation. Fears are usually expressed about political domination. There is no need to express fears of cultural domination, seeing that culturally there are a number of elements common among the various ethnic components of the nation.

I wish to point out that there are some ethnic groups in Africa who, as a result of the unrealistic boundaries drawn almost a century ago by our colonial masters, are spread over two or more neighbouring African countries. There are Ewes in Ghana, in Togo, and Dahomey (that's Benin). There are Gans in Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Togo. There are Yorubas in western Nigeria and Dahomey. The

Bantu people, I suppose, are spread over Central and South Africa. If one were to look closely at the ethnic configuration of Africa, one would perhaps see other instances of such ethnic dislocations or transplants. The consequence of this ethnic dislocation, however, is that it is possible to see particular cultural patterns cut across nations in Africa. All that I have said so far is an introduction to my paper.

I wish now to present some of the worldviews, socio-political ideas, values and institutions which can be said with certainty to pervade the cultural systems of different African peoples. Here I shall be brief for lack of space and time, and, for similar reasons, I shall not normally make mention of specific peoples who hold such and such doctrines. What I have done is to extract the common elements in the cultures of African peoples as may be found in as many of the existing publications as I have been able to look at so far. Such common cultural elements can be considered as the unitive elements or basis upon which African philosophy and theology can be constructed. In some cases, the attempt to bring out the philosophical implications of beliefs or ideas has led to brief philosophical discussion.

Let us start with metaphysics. It can definitely be maintained that all African peoples have the concept of God as the Supreme Being, who created the whole universe out of nothing, and who is the absolute ground of all being. The Supreme Being is held to be omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient; He is uncreated and eternal. In addition to the Supreme Being, African ontology recognizes entities, which include deities, or what are called "lesser spirits." In many books, you read about "spirits," but I prefer to say "lesser spirits," in so far as God, or the Supreme Being, is also a spirit, albeit, the absolute or greatest spirit. Ancestral spirits, man, and the physical world of natural objects and phenomena, these are the entities in African ontology. But the ontology is a hierarchical or gradational one, with a Supreme Being at the apex and a phenomenal world at the bottom of the hierarchy. The hierarchical character of this ontology, however, does not detract from the reality of any of the entities.

Although there are several categories of being, the Supreme Being is, in fact, the ultimate reality, that which is really real. As the uncreated and first cause, He is independent of all the other categories of being. The other entities are real just because, being rooted in the Supreme Being, they participate in His reality. Their reality is therefore derivative and adventitious. Thus, while the Supreme Being is the absolute reality, the other entities, being dependent categories, are only relatively real. African ontology is thus neither wholly pluralistic nor wholly monistic; it is both pluralistic and monistic. Or, while it admits several entities as real, it recognizes only one of such entities, namely the Supreme Being, as the ultimate reality, the really real. The African ontological universe is essentially a spiritual universe, a universe in which supernatural beings play significant roles in the thoughts and actions of the peoples.

What is primarily real is spiritual. But it must be noticed that the world of natural phenomena is part of this spiritual reality. Thus reality in African thought appears to be one and homogenous. That is to say, there is no distinction between the sensible and the non-sensible world, in the sense of one being real and the other unreal, as we have it in other metaphysical systems, such as Platonism and Neo-Platonism. The distinction lies merely in the perceivability of one, *vis-à-vis* the unperceivability of the other. The hierarchical character of the ontology implies, it seems, that a higher entity has the power to influence or destroy a lower entity. And this fact indicates that it is an ontology that spews out a theory of causality. Since man and the physical world are the lower entities, occurrences in the physical world, particularly the unpredictable and the irregular ones, are causally explained by reference to supernatural powers. Their conception of the world as primarily spiritual leads to the concept of a world of action. This concept of action is developed in their metaphysics of potency. The spiritual beings or powers are endowed with powers of varying potencies. They are considered the real or ultimate source of action and change in the world. And since every causal situation involves action and change, causal reference is generally made to powers or spirits. Cause, then, is conceived in African thought in terms of spirit, which, by implication, means power or agency.

In African causal explanations, the concept of chance does not seem to have a place. As the absolute being and the ultimate being, the Supreme Being constitutes the controlling principle in the world. This fact, together with the African belief in the orderliness of the world, leads all Africans to the belief in destiny or fate. It is possible to assume that if man was fashioned, then he was fashioned in a certain way which would determine his inclinations, dispositions, talents, and so on. Just as the maker of a car or an aircraft can determine its speed or durability, so the Creator of man and the world can determine a number of things about him. The notion of a pre-appointed destiny in African thought, therefore, may have a reason in this way. Perhaps it might not have a reason if men were supposed merely to have evolved and not been created by a Creator, as we have it in Epicureanism, for instance. What is not clear in African thought is whether this destiny is chosen or decided on by the individual soul, or is divinely determined or divinely imposed.

The African philosophy of the person is rigidly dualistic. A human being is both body and soul. However, the common conception of the soul appears to be widely varied in its details. In some cases, the soul is conceived to be tripartite, and in others, bipartite. Beliefs in disembodied survival, in life after death, and the conception of the ancestral world where the dead live, are anchored in dualistic presuppositions. It is the undying part of man, namely the soul, which continues to live in the world of spirits. The universal African belief in psycho-physical causal interaction is the whole basis of spiritual or psychical healing practiced in all African communities. Divination and witchcraft are psychical phenomena, commonly experienced in all African communities; it is believed that certain individuals are born with certain spiritual abilities, such as are not acquired through experience.

These abilities are supported by extrasensory powers. Through the faculty of extrasensory perception, certain individuals are able to perceive spirits and receive messages from them to be communicated to people. It may be concluded from this that man's powers of perception are not wholly or exclusively connected with the physical senses, and that human beings are not entirely subject to their limitations of space and time. Telepathy and clairvoyance, obviously, are aspects of the phenomenon of divination; the African diviner can gain knowledge of the thoughts of another person or certain facts without the use of his normal senses. Some communication goes on between the diviner and supernatural powers. Thus divination links the physical and the spiritual worlds.

In Africa, as perhaps elsewhere, there are stories of certain living individuals communicating with the dead, which, if true, would give evidence of survival after death. Divination, then, would appear to be part of parapsychology, and should be investigated seriously; for if it is thought to be genuine, it might establish that the human mind is not material, but a spiritual substance. It should also be obvious that divination has implications for epistemology and the philosophy of mind. Divination and witchcraft, as psychical phenomena, tie in with the spiritualistic metaphysics of African peoples.

All over Africa, there is a general belief that God, the Supreme Being, did not create evil along with good. God's creation was good and perfect. The problem of evil as explained by African thinkers derives from supernatural forces and from man's own desires, choices, and wishes.

As regards the foundations of African ethics, it may be said that African moral principles derive from African thinking about the needs of individuals and the needs of the community. It is a society of person-oriented morality. In African conceptions, it is experiences of human beings living in society which provide the guiding principles of ethics. Moral values are grounded in human experiences and relationships in this world. Values grow out of existential conditions in which human beings function; consequently, what is right or wrong is judged by its consequences for the individual and the society. African ethics, following from the African philosophy of communalism, is essentially social ethics, the ethics that seeks the promotion of the interests and welfare of all the members of the society.

There is hardly any book on the sociology of Africa that does not point out the humanistic attitudes of African peoples and the communal structures of African society. Hospitality, generosity, compassion, concern for the welfare of others, sense of brotherhood, spontaneous communal fellowships, and sentiments, all of which are ingredients of African humanistic philosophy, have been remarked upon by most, if not all, writers, including European travelers to Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries. Dougal Campbell, a Briton who spent twenty-nine years in Central Africa, including Zambia, from the latter part of the 19th century to the early part of this century, observed: "Hospitality is one of the most sacred and ancient customs of Bantuland and is found everywhere; everywhere, until European individualism comes along. A native will give his best house and his evening meal to a guest without the slightest thought that he is doing anything extraordinary."

David Livingston, dear to all Africans, made similar remarks in his diaries. And Rattray, a British anthropologist in the employ of the colonial administration in Ghana in the earlier decades of this century, spent about twenty to thirty years among the Akan peoples, particularly among the Ashanti of Ghana. Rattray made similar remarks about the Ashanti. In fact, in most African societies the word "brother" is used with an all-encompassing connotation. In Africa, an individual is enjoyed for his own sake. Spontaneous conversations between peoples in African communities who may not have met before are eloquent testimony to the African enjoyment of people.

Here I may be permitted to quote President Kaunda of Zambia, who most adequately articulated the African position. President

Kaunda wrote: "Our love of conversation is a good example of this enjoyment of man. We will talk for hours with a stranger who crosses our path, and by the time we part, there will be little that we do not know about each other. We do not regard it as an impertinence or an invasion of our privacy for someone to ask us personal questions, nor have we any compunction about questioning others in like manner. We are open to the interests of other people. Our curiosity does not stem from a desire to interfere in someone else's business, but is an expression of our belief that we are all wrapped up together in this bundle of life. And therefore a bond already exists between myself and a stranger, even before we open our mouths to talk."

The individual is considered of great value, as is recognized in African prayers, in which requests are invariably made for more children, fertility, abundant life, and health for all. The institutions of orphanages and homes for the aged were unknown in all traditional African societies. The idea that the state or some voluntary agency should care for the aged is a bizarre idea which was never conceived in the humanistic African society. In African societies, old people live with their children and grandchildren, who regard it as their responsibility or moral duty to look after them. Old people are wanted and venerated. They are never considered an impediment to the enjoyment of one's life. These attitudes of members of the community toward the old folks among them provide the old folks with the real feeling of self-fulfillment and the worthwhileness of their lives. Episodes common in Western society, such as a lonely old woman dying without the public noticing for several weeks, or an old woman trudging through the deep snow to go to the supermarket, hardly occur in African societies; and they baffle the understanding of Africans living in Western societies.

While Africans universally maintain the existence of a Supreme Being and other supernatural beings, African philosophy unmistakably teaches that man is the center of things. This African philosophy is akin to Chinese Confucianism. A Supreme Being should see to the needs and interests of man. Religion, according to the African view, should have a human or social relevance. African humanism, unlike Western humanism, is not antithetical to religion or a supernatural metaphysics. The metaphysics of Western humanism does not entertain supernatural entities, such as divine beings or spirits. What is really real or what fundamentally exists is matter, according to Western humanist metaphysics. African humanist thought regards reality as fundamentally spiritual. African humanism, placed within a holistically religious ambience, cannot set itself against supernaturalism or other-worldliness.

The aim of Western humanism in rejecting religion or supernaturalism is allegedly to set the human mind free to enable it to concentrate its energies on building the good society on earth. Africans believe that in seeking the heavenly kingdom, every earthly comfort will be given to them. Consequently, African prayers are brimfull of requests to the Supreme Being and the lesser spirits for material comforts and the things necessary for the building of the good society. Africans do not hold that devotion to the welfare or interest of humans in this world, which for them is the crucial meaning of humanism, should necessarily lead to the rejection of supernaturalism. It is possible, in their view, to believe in the existence of supernatural entities without necessarily allowing this to detract from the pursuit of human welfare in this world. Hence in African thought, there does not appear to be a tension between supernaturalism and humanism.

Communalism is another basic category in African theosophical thought. The communal structure of every African society is too well known to be remarked upon. Communalism, the doctrine that the group constitutes the main focus of the activities of the individual members, is an offshoot of the African philosophy of humanism; for the needs and interests of every individual member of the socity can hardly be satisfied otherwise than by a social system, a communal system, that is geared toward the promotion of the general interests of the individuals who belong to that system. Communalism places emphasis on the activity and success of the wider society, rather than, though not necessarily at the expense of and certainly not to the detriment of, the individual.

In African social philosophy, communalism and individualism are not held as exclusive concepts. In this philosophy, the supposed antithesis between the individual and the society is held to be false. African humanism thus places the greatest premium on the welfare of the human being, and African communalism sets great store by the activity, achievement, and the common good of the group or community as a whole. Satellite ideas to these two suns of African thought include the concern for solidarity, the responsibility for one's fellow human being, mutual aid, reciprocal obligations, interdependence, sharing, cooperation and the absence of competition, the social and altruistic ethics of African societies, and the communal ownership of the land. All these elements or factors lend credence to the view of the indigenous African moorings or origins of modern socialism in Africa. There is hardly any African writer on socialism in Africa who has not avowed that socialism is deeply rooted in African culture and tradition. Hence, modern African political leaders and writers prefer to call their brand of socialism "African socialism," because they regard their socialist ideology as having African ingredients. Thus, President Senghor of Senegal wrote: "Negro African society is collectivist or, more exactly, communal. We had already achieved socialism before the coming of the European." Nyerere also stated that African socialism is "...rooted in our past, in the traditional society which produced us. Modern African socialism can grow from its traditional heritage, a recognition of society as an extension of the basic family unit." Nkrumah also said, "If one seeks the political answers of socialism, one must go to communalism. In socialism, the principles underlying communalism are given expression in modern circumstances." And President Kaunda said that, "in the traditional society, socialism has always been practiced by the village headman and the chief and his court".

About four or five decades earlier, Dougal Campbell, the Briton who resided in Central Africa and to whom I have already referred, had made the following observation in his book published in 1922: "Despite the seeming anomaly, all Bantu are pronounced socialists, and socialism is their fundamental and fixed form of government. In view of the rise everywhere of questions relating to socialism and economy, much that is instructive may be gathered from a study of existing conditions in the lives of Central Africans. The social status of equality observed by the primitive of mankind is now the aim and ambition of the most highly civilized communities. In Central Africa, we have a complete, objective lesson before us of the result of life under conditions of equality."

But notice, incidentally, how Campbell describes as "primitive" those people who had attained certain social values and ideals which the "highly civilized" had been seeking to attain. The political organizations of African societies exhibit a very high degree of similarity, if one carefully reads Fortes, Evans-Pritchard, Rattray, Buzia, Danquah, and others. Institutions such as chieftaincy, popular representation on the chief's council, the clear and unambiguous role of the people in the election and deposition of the chief, the pursuit of consensus and reconciliation in political decision-making processes—all of these are quite similar. In African ontologies, cosmologies, psychologies, certain areas of ethics, socio-political values, ideas, and institutions, one perceives some common unity of elements that can surely constitute a legitimate basis for the systematization and sophisticated reconstruction of African philosophy. It is more than likely that when individual modern African philosophers come to formulate the philosophical system of African peoples, differences of interpretation will emerge in some areas. This will be quite understandable. Nevertheless, there will still be some philosophical ideas which the majority of the philosophers of Africa will adhere to. And this will not be peculiar to African philosophy. Western philosophy, for instance, is full of diversities. What, for instance, can one say is the Western philosophy of person? There is no such thing as Western philosophy of the person, for there are several philosophies of the person. And this is so on practically every other philosophical issue. But this fact does not prevent us from talking about Western philosophy in the singular.

There is no denying, I think, that philosophy is brewed out of a cultural soup. Whatever else philosophy aims at doing, it certainly aims at the examination of the intellectual foundations of culture. Philosophy is, in fact, a conceptual response to the fundamental human problems posed in any given human society in any given epoch. For this reason, a great number of philosophical activities and writings in most parts of the world have been aimed at the articulation and elaboration of a given culture. By virtue of the fact that a philosophy must have its roots in the culture of a people, we are able to refer to the philosophical ideas of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as Greek philosophy; and to those of John Locke, Bishop Berkeley and David Hume as British philosophy. How can we possibly refer to the philosophical ideas of the above mentioned philosophers as Greek or British if those ideas did not have a basis in the cultures, traditions, and mentalities of the societies which nurtured them, or if they were antithetical to the whole thrust of Greek or British cultural ethos? Bertrand Russell said in the preface to his book, *Eastern and Western Philosophy,* that his aim was, "to exhibit each philosopher, as far as truth admits, as an outcome of his milieu, a man in whom we have crystallized and concentrated thoughts and feelings, which, in a vague and diffused form, were common to the community of which he was a part."

Now, in modern philosophy, how can we explain the persistence and prevalence of rationalism among European continental philosophers on the one hand, and of empiricism among philosophers of the British Isles on the other hand, if not by reference, respectively, to the European or the British mind? Or, how can we explain the preponderance of the spiritual element in Oriental philosophical writings, if not by reference to the Oriental mind and traditions? In such contexts, "mind" refers to the characteristic mentalities, the habits and tendencies of thought produced by actions and the impressions resulting from experiences and instincts. So understood, "mind" is the product of certain unconscious social or cultural influences and experiences which, to a great extent, determine the bent of an individual thinker. All this underscores the particularity of philosophies.

The upshot of the foregoing discussion is surely that we cannot completely and absolutely divorce the philosophy of an individual thinker from that of the people, from the parent ideas among the people. So-called folk ideas and beliefs constitute the warp and woof of the material fabric of the individual philosopher, whose importance lies in his ability, through critical examination, to make coherent the diffuse ideas, beliefs, and feelings of the people of the community. The individual is heir to a whole apparatus of the concepts and categories within which he works out his thought. Now, if it is true that a given cultural milieu forms the basis of a philosophy, and that culture provides the controlling and organizing concepts and categories for philosophizing, then it can be concluded that it is legitimate to construct an authentic African philosophy (using "philosophy" in the singular) and theology on the basis of the unitive elements of African cultures, such as I have tried briefly to indicate here. The task facing modern African philosophers consists in turning their philosophical gaze on the analytical examination and interpretation of African culture. The main sources of such a philosophy will be the proverbs, myths, folk tales, beliefs, and customs, rituals, and religious songs and prayers, socio-political institutions, the artistic expressions of the people, and so on. As a part of the peoples of Africa, and speaking the languages, modern African philosophers are in a unique position to analyze, elucidate, and interpret the philosophy of African peoples and to sharpen its contours on the global philosophical map. Thank you.

Irving Hexham: Thank you very much for a most stimulating paper, which sets for us the thesis against which, later, we're going to have the antithesis of Fred's and Myrtle's presentations. I think the best thing now is if we try to limit questioning to clarification only; then after we've heard Fred's presentation, we can debate the issues which have been raised between the two approaches, rather than getting straight into a debate now on the crucial issues of methodology.

Discussion

Fred Morgan (Researcher in Afro-Asian Religion at University of Bristol): When you speak of common elements in African philosophical thought, what are your sources for arriving at these elements?

Kwame Gyekye: As I said in the paper, I extracted these common elements from publications, from reading anthropological and sociological works. One has to make a comparative investigation. In this case, since most of the books focus on a particular ethnic group, if one wants to have a general knowledge of the nature of African philosophy, theology, or culture, one has to read and relate various books on the many ethnic groups. The great works of anthropologists Herskovits, Daryll Forde and British-American scholars John Milton, Lienhardt, Goody, Cambrikenner, are excellent books. But they concentrate on just one specific people; they don't relate their findings, their conclusions, to others. Of course, one might have said, perhaps half a century ago, such comparisons could not be made simply because material to be compared was not available. Since the forties, however, much research has gone on, and therefore it is possible, now, to have what we call a "horizontal" approach to the study of Africa.

Fred Morgan: I really had something more specific in mind. For example, when you say that divination and healing can be identified in every African culture, that is a matter of observation.

Kwame Gyekye: Yes, it is a matter of observation. I haven't been to all the African tribes; I depend on what people in the field say.

Fred Morgan: Ideas about a Supreme Being who is the ground of all being, etc., may well be a matter of abstraction or philosophizing on the part of anthropologists, rather than a matter of their observations.

Kwame Gyekye: Anthropologists try to give us generally the bare facts, and then it is the philosophers who are interested in attempting to perceive the philosophical significance, the philosophical relevance, of these works of anthropologists. This is what I have been doing. I try to conceptualize, to introduce some logical order into these discrete and isolated observations. As you know, some African thought is very difficult both for the African and the non-African scholar. One has to be really experienced in oral scholarship, because there are no written sources on African thought produced by original African thinkers, by the African wise men, by African ancestors. What they did produce comes down to us in the form of proverbs and myths and institutions and so on. If you want to study African philosophy and thought, these would be your materials; and then you introduce some logical order. If African people say, for instance, that "beyond God there is no other being," then you try to deduce the logical abstractions. This is the only approach available if you want to construct African philosophy, if you want to systematize African thought; because we do not yet have systematized African conceptual structures. Of course, we do have them, but they are not in written form. The proverbs, for instance, as I have shown in my paper, are reflections on the experiences in the world, telescoped for us in language. You find the proverbs are so terse, so brief, and yet they are condensed ways of expressing ideas. These have to be the sources which the scholar must rely upon. So I read Herskovits, I read Pritchard and Forde, and then I try to make philosophical sense out of it. This is why I will say it is possible for another African philosopher to come along and produce interpretations different from mine.

Fred Welbourn: Professor, I would like further clarification on this issue: Is there anything you can call "African" and apply it to the whole of Africa? I think, personally, there is very little that can be called "African," applied to thought, religion, sociology, and so forth, either in West Africa, East Africa, South Africa, or North Africa. Not only this, but inside of a given country, there are so many differences. I speak of Uganda, because I have been there for 14 years. I am afraid that it is impossible to speak of "African" in a general term as a common denominator. In Uganda, there are so many ethnic types: in the north the Nilotic, and the Bantu in the south. Between the Bantu and the Nilotic, in language, in life, in many things, there is such a tremendous difference. For instance, the Bantu consider all the other Ugandans as second-class people; they have an expression in their language by which they refer to the others as infra-human beings among Africans in the same country in which they live.

Kwame Gyekye: I do not at all deny differences or diversities in African cultures. These differences are there, and this fact is so obvious, one does not have to spend time harping on these differences. I am trying to say that, while we talk about differences, we have to try to see whether also we can talk about affinities or similarities. Is there anything at all in common? It is my thesis that there is.

Irving Hexham: I think we are beginning to get into the debate that is going to come up later. Could we take Eileen's question?

Eileen Barker: Mine isn't meant to be a debate question, but it may sound like one. You said that "cause" is important and that "chance" is ruled out, and you said a tiny bit about "choice," which I would think of as the third of the three. But did you say that one cannot generalize about "choice" as a concept? Would you make any generalization about the African view of free will, openness?

Kwame Gyekye: I was talking about choice in connection with the problem of evil, and I was talking about chance in connection with the African explanations of causality. In African thought, destiny is not considered chance, as you have it in Western thought; everything that happens, happens according to some order.

Eileen Barker: Does choice come in with that causation?

Kwame Gyekye: The problem of determinism and free will is very interesting. In the chapter of my forthcoming book which actually focuses on the Akans of Ghana, I am trying to analyze our concept of fate or destiny. I came to the conclusion that, in spite of their belief in pre-appointed destiny, they regard human destiny as so general—that is to say, that destiny merely provides us with the broad outlines of a person's life—that this concept of destiny allows a wide latitude for the expression of the individual; this is the basis of choice. Although there is destiny, not everything that happens in one's life constitutes a page in the book of one's destiny. Destiny is so broad, so general, that, perhaps, just certain great events in the life of the individual are included in the destiny. There are many other things that are not included in destiny, and this would be the basis for the exercise of choice and free will. For instance, they would say that it is not in my destiny that on the fourth of September, 1978, I should be in Bristol to give a lecture; this event does not matter. But they will say that the day I shall die is in my destiny; or, perhaps, how I will die is in my destiny.

Warren Lewis: Kwame, you made a brief allusion to a teaching on evil. You said that God didn't create it, he created a good world; then you said evil arises, perhaps, from the deities on one hand, perhaps from the human will on another.

Kwame Gyekye: From the supernatural powers.

Warren Lewis: Is there a Fall myth across various African cultures? Is there an Adam-and-Eve model? Is there an archangel? What is the name of whoever it is in the spirit world who messed us up?

Kwame Gyekye: In my own language, we call that the *oboson,* the deities. On the one hand, we have attributions of God as omnipotent and all-loving; then, we also have evil. So, (a) God is omnipotent; (b) God is all-loving; (c) the evil exists. The problem as expressed in the West: if you take any two of these propositions, it makes the third inconsistent. If you take (a) and (b), if God is omnipotent and God is loving, then there should be no evil. If God is omnipotent, he has power to eliminate evil. If you take (b) and (c), evil exists and God is loving, so God is not omnipotent. If you take (a) and (c), then God is not all-loving. That is the problem in a Western nutshell. In African thought, we consider God to be all-loving, omnipotent and all that. We think that evil cannot be explained in these ways, by finding the logical connection between propositions. Evil is the result of the activity of the spiritual powers, the evil spirits. In African thought, the lesser spirits actually have some sort of independent existence, and they operate independently of God. Of course, the problem of evil, I would like to say, also exists in African thought. If God is omnipotent and all-loving, and he sees these supernatural powers, these lesser spirits, do evil, then he should come down upon them and try to stop them from inflicting evil on the world he created. Why doesn't God do so? Why doesn't he intervene on behalf of poor man and destroy the works of these powers, these supernatural forces? Since he is omnipotent and he is also benevolent, all-loving, he should do that; but he doesn't. So we also have that problem. Our people explain that evil comes from supernatural powers and from man's own wishes and desires, resulting from the general nature of destiny.

Irving Hexham: Now we take Angela's question, and after that we break for coffee.

Angela Burr (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London): Your point is an interesting one. Could you possibly explain it on two cultural levels, in terms of cultural superstructure and cultural deep-structure? One would expect great diversity in terms of local and social and economic structures in one's cultural super-structure: diversity of belief in African society. But, on a deeper level, one would expect to find some kind of cultural deep-structure unification, which is what you have been talking about: basic assumptions which people would have in general, in common. They would, of course, on a super-structural level articulate these very differently, in different terms, because of local differences.

Irving Hexham: With that comment, and Kwame's agreement, let us end this session. It raises the question of religion and its cultural expression.

THERE IS NO AFRICAN RELIGION
(ARE THERE TWO KINDS OF "RELIGION?")
Dr. Fred Welbourn

I'm not responsible for this title, but in two senses it does present a case which I should want to argue: in the first place, if it means that in traditional Africa there is not one religion but many religions. There's as much difference between the monotheism of the Maasai and the poly-spiritism of the Ganda as between Christianity and the village Hinduism. My student, Francis Anyika, has even argued that the Igbo themselves have not one but many religions. In the second place I would accept it if it means that—at least in East Africa—there is no vernacular word which can be used to translate what is understood by "religion" in the West. This is true also of Hebrew and Greek. "Religion" is a Roman invention. It may be positively misleading to use it in a study of African society.

When the Gikuyu Karing's Association, in 1929, declared its intention of returning to the purity of tribal custom, it decided to have nothing to do with *dini* for seven years. (*Dini* is derived from an Arabic word which means a whole way of life. But it is used throughout East Africa to describe imported systems of creed, myth, ritual and moral precept; Islam, many variants of Christianity, and, by derivation, the independent churches and syncretistic movements are all *dini*.) In the same spirit, the Bugand Government used to refer to pagans as men who have no *dini*. An alternative was "those who do not read"; and the equation is significant. It lends point to the statement of a Ganda civil servant who, brought up as a Christian, discovered in his retirement the virtues of the old tribal spirits: "There's no conflict between *dini* and *kusamira*. *Dini* is good. It has brought us education and science. But *kusamira*—that's part of being a Ganda." It lends point also to the criticism that, as a priest, I had commented on Kabaka Yekka (the "king alone" party): "The kabaka has nothing to do with *dini*. He is a matter of *obuwangwa,* essential nature."

Again, I have had to use a vernacular word "*kusamira*" because, without circumlocution, it's difficult to translate it into English. *Dini* implies something foreign, something about which choice is possible—just as a man may change his clothes, or choose to go naked, according to his company. Adapting the Ganda civil servant, he might say, "Clothes are good. They give respectability. But skin—that's part of being a man." On the other hand, there's no such choice about *kusamira*. Like the kabaka, it's part of essential nature. The spirits are there (even if invisible), experienced (as we experience atoms) as an integral part of the environment. If you encounter a spirit, you must *kusamira.* It is the appropriate form of response to a particular class of beings who exist in Ganda society. To neglect *kusamira* because you become a Christian is not to choose Christian *dini* instead of Ganda *dini*, but to cut yourself off, under the influence of foreigners, from a fundamental part of Ganda society. In the same way, the Gikuyu dissidents were not choosing Gikuyu *dini* in preference to Christian *dini.* They were saying that to be Gikuyu was the first essential: that this involved by definition such practices as clitoridectomy, and that even if, as was hoped by another group of dissidents, these could ultimately be accepted by Christians, Christianity was at the best an optional extra, better left alone until pure Gikuyu society had been re-established.

In making this sort of distinction between *dini* and tribal custom, they were doing no more than they had learned from at least some of the missionaries who told them that they had no dini; and there is no doubt that in doing so the missionaries thought they were saying not, "You have no revealed religion" but "You have no religion." We could not say the same today. "Tribal religion" is, as much as the "world religions," a subject of concern to scholars, missionaries and administrators. The question is whether in the two connections we are not using "religion" in two different senses and whether, therefore, clarity would be better served by eliminating the term altogether.

Perhaps I can make my question clearer by reference to a slightly different, though still African, context. When I started studying African independent churches, I started from a missiological interest. But I found that I needed the help of scholars in a wide range of "secular" disciplines; and I know that my book was used not only by missiologists, but by anthropologists, historians, and political scientists. Without knowing it, I had been writing not about "religion," but about something much more fundamental; and the issue was at once clarified for me when I met the African Israel Church Nineveh. Here was a community (*Gemeinschaft*) which had ample creed and myth and ritual, but would have been grossly misdescribed, unless this "religion" aspect was presented as part and parcel of an attempt to establish a whole way of living in colonial Africa. The same surely has to be said about attempts to teach early church history in terms of liturgical and doctrinal developments while ignoring Clement's statement that fishing is an activity suitable to Christian gentlemen. There is a sharp contrast with the four Birmingham congregations studied by Thompson ('57), where he found that so-called secular affiliations — membership in trade unions, political parties and the like — much more commonly than church-membership, had an integrating function — provided something of a *Gemeinschaft* in comparison with the *Gesellschaft* of the churches.

It seems to me that, whether or not there are satisfactory German words to describe the two different phenomena represented by the African Israel Church Nineveh and the Birmingham parishes, it is quite impossible to use for both of them the word "religion" or even the word "church." To do so is simply to ignore their inner meaning. The problem is not confined to the study of religion; it is surely the basic difference between the British school of social anthropology and the attitude of behaviourists. It is also the problem with which Laing was wrestling in his approach to psychotics. The standard textbooks did not describe the way in which psychotics behaved with him—because the books were concerned with the "objective clinical signs," while for Laing "the therapist must have the plasticity to transpose himself into another strange and alien view of the world... In this act he draws on his own psychotic possibilities."

The same sort of thing happens when a European studies "religion" in Africa. He has his "clinical signs" of what religion is. Among other things, he understands it as one institution among others—political, economic, legal and so forth. He probably regards it as a voluntary activity. He finds similar signs in Africa and describes them in terms of his own experience: not, it is true, of voluntariness—the facts cannot be stretched that far—but as an institution separate from other institutions, to be described (by comparative religionists) without any reference to the social context. There is, of course, a school of British social anthropologists who see the understanding of African religion and African society as interdependent. They are, I suspect, drawing on their own religious possibilities, as Laing wished to draw on his psychotic possibilities, to enter into an alien view in a manner denied to those whose experience is limited to "Birmingham religion." When this happens it becomes possible to see traditional "religion" not as one social institution among many, but as a dimension of all institutions: not as a set of "clinical signs," but as a total—if strange and alien—way of life, a way of life of which the "clinical signs" are but one mode of expression. Again, I do not think that one word is adequate to describe both categories. To take an example from another culture: for a Hebrew to take a political decision was always to take a theological decision, since God was the focus of political authority; to take a theological decision was always to take a political decision, since the focus of God's activity was the life of the nation. There was no word for "religion" as a separate activity.

There are, it seems to me, at least three different social phenomena in Africa all designated as "religion." There is first traditional "religion." This is a given part of social experience. Although it deals with crises of individuals as well as of society, it is primarily an affirmation of social solidarity. In principle, it is involved in every aspect of life. It is not a voluntary option; and it cannot, except with gross distortion, be studied as a separate institution. It belongs to what H.W. Turner calls an "ontocratic" society, though I prefer "unitary."

At the other end of the scale is the "Birmingham" type of religion, which is found increasingly—whether in traditional or Christian dress—in the towns. It is voluntary. Although it may be concerned with the affirmation of missionary mores, its primary focus is the salvation of individuals. It has little connection with what goes on outside the church building. It is one element in "a modern secular state and religiously plural society." (H.W. Turner) (In 1978 this statement may need verbal qualification.)

Thirdly, there are some of the independent churches, some rural congregations of missionary origin, and Islam, perhaps, in most of its East African manifestations. They are voluntary—at least in the sense that choice does in fact occur. In a secular and plural society, they provide a strong sense of identity for their individual members and are closer in ethos to tribal solidarity than to Western individualism. In principle they are involved in every aspect of life.

Between these three types there are many mixed and intermediate types. There are obvious resemblances and an observable, if not indeed predictable, transition from one to the other. But there are obvious resemblances, and an observable transition, between male circumcision in African societies and in our own. I do not call the latter "initiation;" and I gravely misrepresent the former if I describe the circumcision element as any more than the focal point in a six-month rite of passing from boyhood to manhood. I suggest that at least the same difference exists between traditional and "Birmingham" religion. I cannot justify the use of the same word for both. In "Birmingham," both religion and circumcision have become residual of more fundamental, and radically different, forms of behaviour. One has to do with ontology—with what it means to be a man. The "Birmingham" variety is simply an optional extra. One has to do with commitment, with ultimate concern. The "Birmingham" variety is simply one possible hobby among many; and, if this is "religion" and "religion" refers to spiritual beings, then traditional African societies do not have it. God and the ancestors (like the kabaka) are matters of commitment, of essential nature. They are integrally related to every aspect of life. They are not "putative" but empirical beings.

In his study of the Sotho, Setiloane treats the ancestors as the first group in his description of social structure. They relate to the living in somewhat the same way as an all-pervasive welfare state relates to contemporary local government. This is to get the accent right. The ancestors are concerned with every aspect of life and, therefore, whether or not it is a study of "religion," a study of the ancestors must be a study not merely of "ritual" behaviour but of the whole of life in relationship to them. So I return to the kabaka. My Ganda friends have the gravest difficulty in accepting the view that the kabakaship is a religious phenomenon; and, if by "religion" they mean *dini,* they are no doubt right. *Dini* is an imported institution which cannot alter the essential nature of Ganda society (though there is evidence that internal political forces since independence have been able to do so. I know young, educated Ganda for whom the kabakaship is already no more than a memory). But, if by "religion" they mean "ultimate concern," then the kabakaship was its primary symbol; and no study of the essential nature of Ganda society could be complete without it. Put in other terms, if we try to use the word "religion" only in its Birmingham sense, the Ganda had no religion, only ample symbols of essential nature, of ultimate concern.

These, it seems to me, are what we ought to be studying; and they will teach us much about a complementary study of the West. African independent churches ought to be studied not as "religious" phenomena but as examples of social schism in whatever form. Political parties cannot be adequately understood without reference to their charter myths. Unitary societies have to be analysed in terms applicable to communism and nationalism but not to plural societies. The technological worldview is in ontological opposition to the primal worldview. African witchcraft beliefs are strictly analogous not to British covens and claims to occult knowledge but to our attitudes to coloured immigrants. African cults of the living dead are comparable not with Western spiritualism but with Churchill memorials and the Patrice Lumumba University. Spirit possession is matched by pop sessions; exo-psychic mythology, by Freudian concepts. "African theology" and "Black theology" have to do not with Western conceptualisations, but with the ontological question of the dignity of African man. They are matters not of *dini* but of essential nature.

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THERE IS NO AFRICAN RELIGION...?

Myrtle S. Langley

"There is no African Religion." The statement is not mine. But, rightly or wrongly, I presume that I am being asked to argue that there is no such thing as a unified African religious system, that it is impossible to define what is uniquely or essentially African in Africa's religions. I should at once like to identify myself with Dr. Welbourn's two introductory points:

> Only in two senses does it [the title] present a case which I should want to argue: in the first place, if it means that in traditional Africa there is not one religion but many religions. There's as much difference between the monotheism of the Maasai and the poly-spiritism of the Ganda as between Christianity and village Hinduism... In the second place, I would accept it if it means that, at least in East Africa, there is no vernacular word which can be used to translate what is understood by 'religion' in the West. This is true also of Hebrew and Greek. 'Religion' is a Roman invention. It may be positively misleading to use it in a study of African society.[1]

My offering is a preliminary case study in support of Dr. Welbourn's first point: "In traditional Africa there is not one religion but many religions." Preliminary, because insufficient work has been done to make final statements about Africa's religion or religions; and a case study, because such work as has been done suggests many African religions varying markedly in content across the continent and throughout the ages. In my remarks, therefore, I shall confine myself to *one* aspect of the "religious" beliefs of *one* people: the Nandi of Kenya. The argument of my brief thesis runs somewhat as follows: From the available evidence, there appears to exist, in parts of contemporary traditionalist Nandi, an unhappy juxtaposition of beliefs and practices related to worship of the Supreme Being and veneration of the ancestors. Furthermore, it would appear that this juxtaposition derives from interaction between the Nilotic Nandi and their Bantu neighbours (when and where is not to be precisely determined as yet). Consequently, far from there being a unified "religious system" across the continent of Africa, it can be argued that even systems of recognizably distinct ethnic groups, as we know them today, may lack "unitariness" or unitive coherence.

But first, to introduce the Nandi, their origins and their "religious" beliefs.

The Nandi

1. The People

The Nandi live in the western highlands of Kenya and belong to the Kalenjin cluster of an East African people, successively classified as "Nilo-Hamites," "Paranilotes" and, most recently, "Highland Nilotes." The Kalenjin can be divided further into four sub-groups: (1) the Pokot (Suk) and Marakwet of the Rift Valley; (2) the Sabaot (including the Kony) of Mount Elgon; (3) the Keiyo and Tugen (Kamasia) on the floor and sides of the Rift Valley; and (4) the Kipsigis (mis-named Lumbwa), Terik (or Nyang'ori) and Nandi (Chemng'al). None of these sub-groups is in itself homogenous; included among the Nandi, for example, can be found remnants not only of other Kalenjin sub-groups, but of Luyia (Bantu), Maasai, Sirikwa, Ak(g)iy (Dorobo) and others. Nevertheless, they all share a common cultural and linguistic heritage.[2]

2. Their Origins

For our purposes it is important that something should be said about Nandi origins and migrations. However, it must needs be brief and somewhat oversimplified. As recently as twenty years ago it was thought that the Kalenjin arrived at Mount Elgon from the region of Lake Rudolf about the year 1600 (AD) and there encountered Dorobo hunters-collectors and Bantu settlers. Since then, comparative linguistics, archaeology and oral history have transformed our knowledge of the East African past. The Highland Nilotes (ancestors of the Kalenjin), it is now believed, entered the highlands of Kenya sometime before AD 1,000 and absorbed Southern Cushitic-speaking peoples who had been there for over three or four thousand years already. Says J.E.G. Sutton:

> The "Highland" Nilotes consisting of the Kalenjin, however, derive from a much more ancient population in Kenya. This is clear from comparative linguistics. The differentiation of the Kalenjin languages into three principal groupings—Pokot, Elgon and southern Kalenjin—

> and several sub-divisions within these, and earlier still the split between Kalenjin and Tatoga (who now herd over scattered grassland areas of northern and central Tanzania), and the assimilation of an older southern Cushitic element which is indicated by loan-words, require a period of settlement of a thousand years or more centered on the western Kenya highlands. Archaeological evidence, though not so explicit, will help to bear this out.[3]

Throughout this time of migration, expansion and absorption, cultural interaction was taking place, for example, the borrowing of age-set systems, customs such as circumcision and clitoridectomy, agricultural methods and, presumably, what we term "religious" beliefs.[4]

The name "Nandi" was first mentioned in writing by Johann Ludwig Krapf in 1854, and first put on the map by Henry Morton Stanley in 1876.[5] It is not a very reputable one. Derived from the Swahili word *mnandi,* meaning "cormorant," it was used by traders, missionaries and colonial authorities to refer to the Kalenjin generally, and more particularly to the sub-group known to themselves and others as the *Chemng'al* (meaning "many words" and probably derived from their tendency to engage in long deliberations before reaching a decision), and presumably indicated their "voraciousness."[6] They were well-known for their warlike nature and had a reputation for lightning raids on trading parties. The British sent no less than five punitive expeditions against the Nandi between 1896 and 1905-6, one of the chief Nandi transgressions being to replenish their store of arms by dismantling the Uganda Railway and to appropriate the telegraph wires as ornaments for their women.

3. Their "Religion"

My personal acquaintance with the Nandi dates back to 1966, when I arrived in their midst to lecture at a teachers college. At the time I found many of the people, especially the young, experiencing a crisis of identity. This led to my subsequently returning and undertaking research on three *rites de passage:* initiation, marriage and divorce.[7] "Religious beliefs" as such were therefore not my central concern, but I could scarcely escape them! Because for the Nandi, all of life is religious.[8] Every aspect of their cultural framework, material, social and spiritual, was a closely interwoven, direct response to the physical environment in which the people found themselves. Even today, after some fifty years of change, it is difficult to separate the "sacred" from the "profane," so-called.[9]

The initial key to our understanding is the Nandi concept of *kiet,* which may be translated "world" or "order," but is probably better rendered "nature." Nature or *kiet* can be understood in the narrow sense of natural forces such as rain, thunder and lightning, or more commonly in the wider sense of "nature" with a capital "N," signifying "the balance of nature," "world order" or "cosmological balance."

In this "natural" scheme of things the Nandi recognize what may be termed a hierarchy of personal and impersonal forces: God, the thundergods, the shades of the ancestors (or "living-dead"), magic, and medicine.

God or *Asis* (*Asis* is the indefinite noun, and *asista* the definite, meaning "sun") is the beneficent creator, sustainer of life and arbiter of justice. Symbolized by the sun, he is the giver of light, rain and fertility. He is known by other names such as *Cheptalel, Cheptilil, Chebobkoiyo, Chepkelyensogol* and *Chebonamunni*, which can be rendered by translation (respectively) "the shining one," "the holy one," "the benefactor," "the omnipotent or supernatural" and "the protector." However, it is not at all certain that the linguistic connotation is the correct or only interpretation of these names of *Asis.* On the one hand they may be purely descriptive of the sun and on the other (as I have reason to believe) they may refer in some of their forms to female ancestors of the Nandi.

Ilet-ne mie and *Ilet-ne ya* are the good and bad thunder-gods whom *Asis* allows to send life-giving rain or destructive lightning.

More important to daily behaviour and everyday living are *oik* (singular: *oindet*)—the shades of the ancestors, the "living-dead." These shades may act either in a beneficent or maleficent manner towards their descendants, depending on how they are treated in this life and the next. Consequently, they act as an incentive to the Nandi to act kindly towards elderly relatives and require propitiatory offerings of beer and milk. Even today, the *oik* are placated and their restraining influence felt. For example, I recollect the puzzlement expressed by the young Swedish wife of a non-practising Nandi Muslim when relating to me her mother-in-law's dismay at her acquisition of a moonflower plant (*datura sauveolens* sp.) for the garden. It was, she stated, unlucky, and, moreover, snakes liked it and might therefore enter the house. Libations of milk and beer would have to be placed on the floor in readiness. I then explained to the young woman that the Nandi believed snakes to be one of the guises under which the living-dead returned to visit relatives.

Magic is widespread in Nandi and its perpetrators greatly feared to this day. It is to be distinguished from medicine, although both magical cures and herbal remedies can be employed simultaneously.

Harmful sorcery—evil magic—is practised by sorcerers and sometimes by "seers." Divination and anti-sorcery—good magic—are practised by several types of persons whose functions often overlap.

Medicine is practised by the herbal doctor or medicine man whose function is solely beneficent and who learns his skill by apprenticeship to a senior.[10]

Perhaps it would be helpful at this juncture to say that Nandi society was a decentralized one with groups of neighbourhoods and neighbourhood elders legislating. Ritual matters were in the hands of ritual elders and specialists who did not belong to a particular or priestly class. Rather they were chosen from among those of senior status held in respect by the community. However, there had settled in Nandi sometime during the first half of the nineteenth century a family of "seers" or *laibons* from the neighbouring Maasai. From the chief of these ritual experts, the Laibon, the Nandi sought sanctions at such times as the seasons for circumcision and planting, the occasions of raiding expeditions and war, and in the event of drought or crisis. His role was neither priestly nor political. It was the British who endowed him with an overtly political role when, in 1906, they made Kibeles paramount chief. Indeed, there were no chiefs among the Nandi until the arrival of the British!

God and the Ancestors in Nandi

What I have outlined appears to be a coherent system and is. My problem arose when confronted with G.W.B. Huntingford's statement to the effect that the ancestors in Nandi acted as intermediaries between men and god (*Asis*). I could find no evidence for this, and informants expressed similar disquiet. Certainly the *oik* are placated and their restraining influence is felt over behaviour; but *Asis* is also directly appealed to daily for protection, during war for success, at the planting of crops for fertility, and in the event of difficult judicial deliberations for the implementation of justice. Witness the following prayers:

At sunrise the guardian of the house, standing or sitting with his arms crossed, said:

> *God, I have prayed that you will guard the children and the cattle.*

or

> *God (Asis), as you rise, rise with me.*

In the morning, during times of war, the mothers of the warriors went outside their huts and, after spitting towards the sun, said:

God, give us health.

At the rain-making ceremony, the people sang:

God, we have prayed to you.
Give us rain.
Look at this beer and milk.
We are suffering like women labouring with child.
Guard pregnant women and oxen for us.

On ceremonial occasions, elders prayed:

God, give us blessing,
God, give us life,
God, give us fertility and cattle.[11]

These prayers are ample proof that the Nandi prayed directly to *Asis* without the need for intermediaries.[12] So too, according to J.G. Peristiany and I.Q. Orchardson, did the Kipsigis.[13]

With this apparent contradiction in mind, I attended a conference in Nairobi. Among the papers given was one by Christopher Ehret entitled "Some Possible Trends in Precolonial Religious Thought in Kenya and Tanzania." It was sceptically received by many, but for me it provided fresh stimulus and illumination as it focused in part on the question of God and the ancestors in Nandi.

Interaction of "Religions"

Ehret asserted in general terms:

> In ancient East African and Middle Nile Basin thought, it would appear that the great uncontrollable factor governing life and death for the community as a whole was climate, and so God was named with climatic metaphors. In the Middle Nile Basin a major application of this concern was a rain-making ritual directed specifically to the high God. In contrast, for neither proto-Bantu *-jambe* "God" nor for its replacement in early Eastern Bantu, *-lungu,* can any underlying climatic metaphors be suggested. The religious thought of the Bantu-speaking immigrants into East Africa had been nurtured in the equatorial forest regions where climatic fluctuation was an insignificant factor in the maintenance of life. Instead, other aspects of life, such as the problems of disease, and of social order and belonging, emerged as the primary religious concerns; and therefore religious practice among the early Bantu centered on the spirits closer to the individual, and the high God remained usually a remote figure not directly invoked.[14]

Now according to this schema, my suspicions were being confirmed. The Nandi fitted into the former and not into the latter category.

They addressed *Asis* directly, as was to be expected. It remained to look more closely at what Ehret and Huntingford had to say on the subject of the "spirits" before reaching a final conclusion.

The following quotations summarize Huntingford's general and particular conclusions on the subject:

> *Asis* is really to be regarded as the personification of an element that regulates the balance between man and nature, identified with the sun in name because the sun is an obvious and visible body whose effects on the earth can be felt by even the most primitive savage. This element is one that can be approached only through a mediator, and for the Nandi the principal intermediary is the body of the spirits of the dead Nandi, who being still members of the tribe, are considered to be effective agents in the affairs of the living up to the third ascending generation from that of the oldest of the living: beyond that, their names are mostly forgotten and their influence weak.
>
> The proper Nandi name for the spirits is *oik*, singular *oindet*, though they are sometimes called *musambwanik*, singular *musambwanindet*, a word of Bantu Kavirondo origin (Kakumega and Hanga, *umusambwa*, 'ancestral spirit'), which is properly used in Nandi of evil, elemental spirits which are otherwise called *chemosit*, plural *chemosisiek*. These evil spirits have never been people, and among them are those that carry disease. No offerings are made to them . . . A man may be walking along a path, and suddenly feels his foot catch in something which trips him; he can see nothing which can have done it, and attributes the fall to a *musambwanindet*. But he can do nothing, for these evil spirits are not to be placated by any offerings, and the most that man can do is keep them out of his dwellings . . .[15]
>
> According to Beech, some Suk denied belief in a future life; but it seems clear that there is a form of ancestor-cult like that of the Nandi, with snakes playing a similar part as vehicles of the spirit.[16]

Obviously Ehret takes Huntingford at face value on the subject of intermediaries, but his linguistic evidence is so strong as to compel some suggestion of borrowing and religious interaction—just as I had suspected. I quote:

> In many of the recent non-Bantu speaking societies in Tanzania and southern and central Kenya, an emphasis on the ancestors in religious practice has been evident, but in a number of cases there exists clear linguistic evidence for earlier Bantu influence on spirit conceptions. A case in point is that of the Kalenjin of western Kenya. Nandi ancestors, for instance, have distinctly greater immediate importance in religious observances than the high God. On the other hand, earlier Bantu influence of some kind on conceptions of the ancestor spirits appear in the wide adoption in western Kalenjin dialects of a Luyia-Gisu term, in the form of *mu:sa: mpwa:n, a*

> borrowing dating probably to the period 1,000-1,500 AD. This term seems, in general, to be coming to apply primarily to an implacable evil spirit, a non-ancestral being possibly of ancient local provenance in western Kenyan thought, rather than the usual non-evil, placatable ancestor spirit. But there are other indications in Nandi usage which point to the original adoption of this term as a synonym for ancestor spirits. So its borrowing by Kalenjin communities may well indicate an earlier North-east Victoria Bantu influence on Kalenjin conceptions of the relative importance of ancestor spirits. That the high God once had at least somewhat greater immediacy for religious practice among the Kalenjin seems indicated in any case in the wording of Nandi sayings and cursing formulas, which because of their standardized form can preserve earlier statements of ideas.[17]

Assertions from the Nandi came to confirm the Bantu Luyia terminology. Only in areas influenced by the Luyia was the term *musambwanik* in use, and the puzzlement of Walter Sangree as to why the Kalenjin-acculturated but Luyia-speaking Tiriki should have two terms for the ancestors, *baguga* and *misambwa.*[18]

I consequently came to the following conclusions about the "religion" of the Nandi, in the process positing an interaction of two differing "religious" sytems sometime in the past: The Nandi connect God with the sun. Some assert that God is the sun, while others advance the more sophisticated notion that the sun is a manifestation of God. I have gathered information from varying sources and come to the conclusion that to say that the sun is a symbol for God is probably the best interpretation. Points to note are as follows: At morning prayers, *Asis* is asked to rise with the supplicant: "*Asis,* as you rise, rise with me." At evening prayers, sometimes ashes are thrown towards the West—in the direction of the setting sun—in the belief that *Asis* can curse as he disappears for the night. It has been held that at the time of solar eclipse, *Asis* ceases to be.

On the evidence of comparative linguistics, it can be plausibly argued that about two thousand years ago the Southern Nilotes (ancestors of the Kalenjin) borrowed the concept of God/sun linkage from the Rift Southern Cushites who, in the last millennium B.C., linked God with the sun. The linkage continues in modern Iraq, where the same word is used both for sun and God, and in modern Kalenjin, where there may or may not be a slight distinction made. For example, in Marakwet, *Asis* is applied to both God and son; while in Nandi, Keiyo and Kipsigis, *Asis* (the indefinite "sun-ness") is applied to the Supreme Being, whereas *asista* (the definite noun) is reserved for the sun in the sky. This modern distinction serves to strengthen the contention that the linkage was always figurative and in no way implied that the sun was God.

Furthermore, the origin of the concept can be traced to the Middle Nile Basin from whence these people came. Moreover, both East African and Middle Nile Basin thought of the time associated divinity with the elements, because the great uncontrollable factor governing life and death for the community was climatic; but the ancestral spirits were primarily associated with human beings and, being derived from the life-force or "shadow" of the living, were of a different kind or essence from the Supreme Being. This is clearly seen in Nandi beliefs concerning *Asis* and the spirits of the ancestors (*oik*): they are different in kind and are approached in different ways and for different reasons.

On the other hand, the religious thought of the Bantu-speaking immigrants into East Africa was nurtured in regions where climatic fluctuations were an insignificant factor in the maintenance of life and where the problems of disease, social order and belonging became the primary religious concern. For this reason, their religious practice centered in the spirits close to the individual, whereas the Supreme Being usually remained a rather remote figure not directly involved in the affairs of day-to-day living.

Consequently, one can detect in the Nandi "religious" system not only the Southern Nilotic heritage of God/sun linkage and the ancestor cult but also extraneous elements, probably of Bantu origin. The evil spirits—*musambwanik* and *chemosisiek* (feared and guarded against)—are most likely to have their immediate origins among the Luyia and Dorobo respectively.

Conclusion

Finally, some concluding remarks of relevance to the subject of this conference, and a story, from Ireland.

Comparative linguistics, archaeology and oral history suggest that during Africa's past, various religious systems have interacted with and borrowed from each other. All too often false similarities have been found because scholars have been too ready to make generalized deductions about apparently related peoples. Instead, perhaps, they ought to have worked on the assumption of "different until proved similar!" To take only one example, that of the ancestors, Huntingford might just as well have generalized to the tribal people of Southeast Asia as to the Pokot. And what of pre-Greek, pre-Roman, pre-Christian Europe? The Christianization of Europe has been subjected to minimal scholarly research. Perhaps the "unhappy juxtaposition" of the saints as intermediaries and Christ as sole mediator in Catholic and Protestant Christianity, respectively, is of the same nature as that of the ancestors in Nandi. Surely there is no uniquely African, Asian, European or, for that matter, Western "religion," but rather differing responses of man to his environment expressed in the context either of pre-literate, pre-rationalistic, pre-technological cultures, or of those belonging to our modern scientific era.

While reading the proceedings of the Barrytown Conference, I came across Francis Botchway's tale of the engineer who was puzzled by the tree which would not be moved until the gods had been consulted; no modern machinery was sufficient to move its bulk until the gods which inhabited it had been requested to leave, whereupon it fell with the push of a hand. I was reminded of a story related to me by my sister on a recent visit to Ireland. (I'm Irish, or Anglo-Norman, to be more exact; for my forbears went over with Cromwell to settle the Irish question once and for all!) The pre-Christian Irish planted circles of trees known colloquially as "forts," or so the story goes. Recently, one such fort was interfered with to make way for a modern thoroughfare. Its location has since been the scene of numerous accidents and mishaps. But who remembers how to consult the gods? The druids have long since disappeared. It's fifteen hundred years and more since the coming of Patrick and the conversion of Ireland, but still the differing "religions" can be distinguished side by side...

Notes

[1] F. B. Welbourn, "There is no African Religion" ("Are there two kinds of 'religion'?")—paper read at Bristol, September, 1978.

[2] On the Kalenjin people generally and their origins, see: A.C. Hollis, *The Nandi: Their Language and Folk-lore* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909); G.W.B. Huntingford, *The Northern Nilo-Hamites,* also *The Southern Nilo-Hamites* (London, International African Institute, 1953), "The Peopling of the Interior of East Africa by Its Modern Inhabitants," in R. Oliver & G. Mathew (eds), *History of East Africa,* Vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963): J.E.G. Sutton, "Some Reflections on the Early History of Western Kenya," in Bethwell A. Ogot (ed.) *Hadath 2,* (Nairobi, British Institute in Eastern Africa, 1973); B. E. Kipkorir with F. B. Welbourn, *The Marakwet of Kenya,* (Nairobi, EALB, 1973); A. T. Matson, *Nandi Resistance to British Rule 1890-1906* (Nairobi, EAPH, 1972).

[3] J.E.G. Sutton, "Some Reflections," *loc. cit.,* p. 22.

[4] For substantiation, see Christopher Ehret, "Linguistics as a Tool for Historians" in Bethwell A. Ogot (ed.), *Hadith 1* (Nairobi, EAPH, 1968); "Cushites and the Highland and Plains Nilotes to AD 1800," in Bethwell A. Ogot (ed.), *Zamani: A Survey of East African History (New Edition,* Nairobi, EAPH, 1974); *Southern Nilotic History: Linguistic Approaches to the Study of the*

Past (Northwestern, 1971.)

[5] G.W.BN. Huntingford, *The Southern Nilo-Hamites*, p. 19.

[6] I.Q. Orchardson, *The Kipsigis* (Nairobi, EALB, 1961), p. 5.

[7] Myrtle S. Langley, "Ritual Change among the Nandi: A Study of Change in Life-Crisis Rituals 1923-1973," Bristol, doctoral dissertation, 1976 to be published in 1979 by Christopher Hurst, London, under the title *The Nandi of Kenya: Life Crisis Rituals in a Period of Change.*

[8] John S. Mbiti, "Africans are notoriously religious. . ." in his *African Religions and Philosophy* (London, Heinemann, 1969), p. 1.

[9] It is a moot point as to what distinguishes a "religious" from a "secular" world view. For example, B. E. Kipkorir asserts: "It is safe to assume that the Kalenjin were originally a highly secular people." ("The Sun in Marakwet Religious Thought," paper read at the Conference on the Historical Study of African Religions, Nairobi, June 1974). Taking F. B. Welbourn seriously, I prefer to speak of the "religious" nature of African societies inasmuch as they possess primal world views expressing by their symbolisms the essential nature of society and what is of ultimate concern.

[10] See my "Ritual Change among the Nandi," pp. 25-8, for greater detail at this point.

[11] Various oral and written sources.

[12] G.W.B. Huntingford, *The Nandi of Kenya: Tribal Control in a Pastoral Society* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 136.

[13] J.G. Peristiany, *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1939); I.Q. Orchardson, *op. cit.*

[14] Christopher Ehret, "Some Possible Trends in Precolonial Religious Thought in Kenya and Tanzania," paper read at the Conference on the Historical Study of African Religions (Nairobi, June 1974), p. 5.

[15] G.W.B. Huntingford, *The Nandi of Kenya*, pp. 136, 142.

[16] G.W.B. Huntingford, *The Southern Nilo-Hamites*, p. 89.

[17] Christopher Ehret, *loc. cit.*

[18] Walter H. Sangree, *Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya* (London, OUP, 1966), pp. 33-44. The *baguga* are recently deceased paternal and maternal agnatic ancestors; the *misambwa* are the generalized ancestral spirits. Apparently the way to getting the *misambwa's* attention is through the *baguga.* Of course Sangree is unaware that the Nandi terms for paternal and maternal agnatic ancestors are *inguget* and *ingoget*, respectively.

Discussion

Irving Hexham: I think we will follow the procedure we followed earlier, and simply ask Myrtle and Fred questions of clarification. I'd like to thank them both for their papers, which have been very stimulating, and will add to the discussion this afternoon.

Angela Burr: Were you saying that all African people have the same degree of religion?

Myrtle Langley: No, I was saying that, in a general sense, if you equate religion with societal concerns and the nature of life, you do find different systems in Africa, which now and in recent times have interacted to produce systems which, even of themselves, aren't unitary or coherent, but which, of course, people will transform through interaction into a system.

Angela Burr: I was wondering if you were saying that African traditional society was in no sense secular, or that Africa is not as secular as the West.

Myrtle Langley: This depends on what you call "secular," or what you call "religion." I think that for the Nandi, for example, ritual might be what we call secular ritual today; for example, life-crisis rituals—particularly initiation, though not so much funerals. And yet, when you analyze the rituals and the symbols of the rituals, there is a great deal of "religion within symbols," although it is concerned with what we call "secular" life in the West. Whereas in West Africa there are many systems—the divinities, the priestly class, what you might call on the surface "religion,"—in the East, you won't get what you would immediately call religions.

Kwame Gyekye: How would the two speakers define "religion?" I know that this is a big question, but also very important, especially in categorizing bodies of doctrines or beliefs.

Myrtle Langley: I have put the word in quotes right through the discussion. I use it in the sense of people's response to their environment in a total way, which includes their response to life as a whole and to the origins of life, and, therefore, the Supreme Being, and the ground of their being, their ultimate experience.

Kwame Gyekye: Do you think that definition is applicable to other religions?

Myrtle Langley: Yes, I do, which is why I would say one can't get away from religion. But some will call that "secular," and there you have the perennial problem of definition.

Fred Welbourn: Part of the object of this paper was to eliminate the use of the word "religion," since it is quite impossible to define. I think religious studies ought to be concerned with humans living.

Irving Hexham: Have you got a name for those studies?

Fred Welbourn: I would study "commitment."

Irving Hexham: "Department of Commitment?"

Fred Welbourn: Yes. I would unquestionably include Marxism.

Angela Burr: Isn't that based on the premise that all human beings have commitment?

Fred Welbourn: No, we might find ourselves studying non-commitment. It is very interesting that my colleague at the University of Bristol, who is teaching religion and literature, though he and I work entirely independently, found out about the same time I did that we are saying commitment is what we are really talking about.

Kwame Gyekye: Would you say that Marxism and atheism are religion?

Myrtle Langley: I would say so, yes, but I think you should try to define the term and put some parameters on it. As soon as you use "religion," everyone in this room has particular ideas of what we mean. One uses the term "ideology" for Marxism, yet some say Marxism is not an ideology; so you have the same problem, haven't you?

Fred Welbourn: Marxism and religion should be studied in the same bracket as religion, which doesn't commit me to denounce it.

Harold Turner: One could talk about a "department of religion and irreligion." I wouldn't want to, but one could.

Fred Welbourn: Taking "irreligion" there as a positive thing?

Harold Turner: As a thing always related to religion, as it were, parasitically. It doesn't arise independently or apart from reaction against religion. It's historic. The two do belong together historically, and empirically they can't be separated.

James Dickie: The word "dini" is used in Arabic to translate "religion," but it is by no means the same thing. It means "custom." Christianity never rooted itself in Europe as a "dini;" it was simply one ingredient in a complicated broth. Islam unquestionably is a "dini." A "dini" embraces all aspects of life—economic, cultural, aesthetic, positively everything! Which raises the question of how far a comparison of Islam and Christianity is possible. One can compare them only up to a certain point, because they are not both "dinis."

Fred Welbourn: As far as East Africa is concerned, that which they call "dini" is not "din." "Dini" is an imported system, which is like changing your clothes, whereas "din" is more like changing one's skin. What I regard as important is "din," whether it is found in some places in Europe or Islam or in Africa. In this sense, African indigenous religions are "din," whereas in most cases, Christianity is not, nor Islam. Because these misunderstandings arise, I don't want to use the word "religion." Luber, an American psychologist, who wrote about religion, asked 68 different social scientists what they mean by religion and got back 68 different answers, some of them completely incompatible. Or else we take up with Mr. Facum, when he says: "When I say religion, I mean the Christian religion, and when I say the Christian religion, I mean the Protestant religion, and when I say the Protestant religion, I mean the Church of England as by law established." We either have this complete confusion, so "religion" means almost anything we want it to mean, or we get this sharp definition. Neither of these will do. So, let's abolish the word.

Harold Turner: If you do, you've just got to get yourself another word for the same range of phenomena which you are going to be studying. You are changing the labels, and you may protect yourself from some of the points about which you may feel sensitive. But what you are studying remains the same, the same field of interest.

Irving Hexham: How would you define religion?

Harold Turner: I'll give you my working definition. It comes from Joachim Wach, and that whole range of scholarship which lies between these two extremes Fred is talking about. I intend mine as an open and working definition, and every word is important: "An active and total response to what is encountered deeply as ultimate reality." Naturally it is a bit loose at the edges, but it is a religious definition of religion, so that we do know what we are talking about.

Myrtle Langley: But isn't the Marxist then talking about ultimate reality when he is talking about "man as the measure of all things?" This is why we include in our definition something the common man would not include.

Harold Turner: I would include Marxism, in the sense that it was mentioned last night as a heresy, as one would include irreligion in the study of religion. But I wouldn't call Marxism a religion in the sense that it lacks the essential thing that religious people through history have lived and died by, namely, some transcendent reference. Marxism, in practice, opposes and wants to get rid of known religion. That is a funny position to be in, if you are going to call it a religion.

Fred Morgan: You seem to be arguing for your own self-sufficiency here. Where do you begin in listing the religions? Do you begin by saying there must be a transcendent for it to be a religion, or do you begin by listing those who declare themselves to be religions? Do you start by listening to someone else's self-declaration as a religion, or do you say: "I will declare if you are a religion or not!"

Harold Turner: I don't start theoretically like that; I start empirically, by gathering together a group of words in languages which refer to things which we would, on the face of it, call religious: like worship, altars, prayers, or sacrifices. We don't call those primarily economic or political activities.

Fred Morgan: But that is because within our religion we call these items religious.

Harold Turner: Not just within ours. Those are our terms for them, but other people have terms for altars and priests and prayers and sacrifices. The items we're discussing have a family resemblance, whatever the language or term.

Fred Morgan: Let's turn the situation around: other people may have terms for things which don't occur in our religion; then, from their point of view, we may not count as a religion, because we don't have those things.

Harold Turner: But the things I'm talking about we do all share. We do have sacred places. All the peoples of the world have places of worship. There are certain basic things: people pray, they seem to have been doing it for as long as human history, though, at the fringes, there are points to be explored.

James Dickie: Surely any definition of religion embraces two components: a religion embraces dogma and ritual. Marxism has a basic dogma, but I don't see it has any ritual.

Angela Burr: Of course it has! What are left-wing demonstrations? (laughter)

Eileen Barker: Can I just put in one thing? I know I'm out of order, but they have all been out of order too. I get very worried at this sort of meeting when people start saying religion is or religion is not, you just have this platonic idea, or it has just got two points! I agree entirely with Harold that there is a family resemblance and I'm sympathetic towards Fred; but I think that if you throw the name "religion" out you create as many new problems as you solve. Surely, what we wish to call "religion" depends on what our problem is. If we want to see how certain practices function in a particular way, then we can look at secular rites, secular beliefs, people going to altars. If we want to know what people choose to regard as sacred, then we are asking another set of questions. We arbitrarily decide that one thing is religion, and fail to look at what our question is. We then define religion either functionally or ontologically or socially or some other way, and we will exclude a whole lot of important things which we ought to allow ourselves to examine.

Kurt Johnson: The Marxists in Japan don't consider the Unification Church a religion. They are very adamant about that, but for different reasons. Certain Jews and Christians in the United States similarly argue that the Unification Church is not a religion, but a political movement. It's a matter of perspective: perhaps from the Japanese-Marxist, or the American-Christian perspective, the Unification Church is not religion.

Irving Hexham: We meet again at 2:30, to take up the argument about religion in Africa. Now, let's eat.

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION
Discussion on Morning Addresses

Before the session, the Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, Director of the World Congress of Faiths, and Dr. Kurt Johnson, Director of "National Council on Church and Social Action" were introduced.

Irving Hexham: We want to discuss some of the points raised in this morning's session. I think it would be a mistake were we to get bogged down in definitions of religion, so I wonder if people would like to raise particular points arising out of what we heard this morning, out of the two papers, and the ways in which they interrelate, or things which people feel haven't yet been discussed.

Stanley Mogoba (Research Student, University of Bristol, England): I'd like to comment briefly on the first paper basically to say that I think that the points of similarity that have been brought forward by the speaker [Gyekye] are basically true of our people. In most cases today, one can speak only with a limited authority of one group of people. But I want to say that what has been said is true of my people, by and large. I want to say that I think an element of something common in a wider area is there. The example given by Myrtle, the snake being interpreted as an ancestor, is common in a lot of groups. Whether one can conclude that it is general all over the continent, is another matter.

The papers that were given today point to a methodology that is going to be adopted for the future. Original studies are to be systematized, so that we not only have one person writing from a particular area, but people representing areas and working together, trying to look at the same phenomena in the different areas, and then coming to the same conclusions. Those conclusions will be accepted on very strong authority. I want to say that I missed the note of authority from the first speaker. I thought he would tell us more about what he knows for certain about his people. As you said last night, you have done some research with the Akan people in Ghana. If this note of authority had come in, that, at least, would show most people that it is not only from a library, but that it does come from real-life situations, and that it is from that standpoint you looked at the libraries and began to realize that there are some elements fairly widespread.

Kwame Gyekye: I have been doing some work on the Akans of Ghana; in fact, the philosophical thought I have been researching the past six years and the book I hope to publish next year is actually on the philosophical ideas of the Akans. But, as I from time to time read what others have written about other African peoples, it dawned upon me that these things I have read about other African people are quite similar to what I am doing with the Akans. Language is so important in studying the thought of people; so naturally I am limited, since I can't speak Bantu or Pictu or other African languages. So I depend on what other, able scholars say about other African people, using what they say as basis for my conclusions. At this stage of philosophical and theological scholarship on Africa, we have to begin with in-depth studies of various African peoples and use these as bases for constructive African philosophy. I don't want to limit myself to the Akans; my perspective in the paper was not only Akans. I wanted to bring out the continental approach in the paper.

Irving Hexham: Would Fred perhaps like to respond on the point of the similarities?

Fred Welbourn: There are two things I'd like to say about this pan-African philosophy. I don't know anything about philosophy; I know only about religions. But trying to generalize too much, trying to get a general African picture, in fact, is to derogate the richness of individual countries. That's quite apart from the academic dangers of generalizing too much. The other thing, and in a way perhaps more important, is that we should not confine ourselves to Africa. For example, the Fosta Maasai seem to me to be closer to the ancient Hebrews, and the agricultural Ganda closer to the ancient Canaanites than either is to the other. What we are talking is not an African world, put a primal world, which covers a large number of people in Africa, a large number of people in contemporary Asia, and also a good number in Europe before the 16th century. To call this "African" is to miss the point.

Irving Hexham: I wondered in the course of the discussion whether one might not talk about Hinduism. Fred Morgan might like to come in on that point. It seems that many of the problems we are talking about in African religion are in some ways similar to the questions of Hinduism as well.

Fred Morgan: Well, I wouldn't want to generalize! Yes, what shocked me—if this isn't too flippant an idea—is that the problems discussed in these papers are similar to the problems which have been discussed by Hindus in the context of their own tradition, only they discussed them several centuries ago, and they haven't stopped discussing them since; they have had a longer headstart on the discussions. The whole question of the relationship between diverse local tradition and a kind of a unified field within which those traditions operate has been metaphysized in the Hindu context. Their philosophy is a philosophy of diversity within unity, approached on a whole number of different standpoints. No doubt there are a multitude of reasons for one wanting to take up this kind of philosophical problem, including political reasons, which, of course, haven't been touched on at all in these papers, so far as I noticed. But, yet, I think the Hindu model is a foretaste of what is going to happen in the African context.

Irving Hexham: I always had trouble teaching Hinduism. One tends to begin with the Vedas, and then the Upanishads, then things develop so that students think something has fallen away—Vedic religion has passed; but it isn't so.

Angela Burr: The trend in the 1960s in the study of the Hindu tradition was to see the idea of unity in diversity and the relationship between the two. It is interesting from that point of view that nomads, Canaanites and Maasai, have something in common, more than with the agriculturalists. I think that peasants, by the nature of their agriculture, have a common tradition; but there is still a diversity in religious terms between the peasants, say, of South America, who are Catholics, and the peasantry in India, and peasantry in Africa. So I think, despite the problems of their environment, which they obviously express in some similar terms, still there is as much difference between nomads in Africa and in the Middle East as there would be between nomads in Africa and agricultural peasantry. Yet, I don't see why you can't operate a unity-in-diversity model in Africa, in the same way as you can in India.

James Dickie: I am not sure about unity. I normally would start with diversity, especially in the Indian context. If both India and Africa be continents, one would expect them to exhibit an equally bewildering diversity of religious phenomena. Hinduism, I would say, didn't exist until the nineteenth century, when it was systematized into existence by the Victorian apologists as a response to the missionaries. What had existed up till then was in some sense a highly diversified racial belief which differed widely from one area to another.

Angela Burr: I'm arguing that in India there are enormous regional differences, perhaps as great as you find in certain parts of Africa. Particularly, you have 287 tribal groups. There are basic concepts in the Indian subcontinent related to purity, pollution, and caste system, which you don't find in all the tribal areas. Perhaps because of the way Africa was colonized, and the large number of different imperial powers that controlled it, you couldn't have the same kind of unitary study we have had in India by the British. People have centered on the differences in Africa and the unity of India; because India had a unified imperial power. I think that is what is reflected; but if you had different kinds of people going to different parts of India without the same basic model, you'd come up with very different studies. You have only to travel across India to see that there is as much difference there as there is, say, between the Karamoja and the Ganda.

Fred Morgan: I agree with everything James Dickie has said up to this point. And wherever you go in India, too—well nearly everywhere—you find someone who has a way of interpreting events in a pan-Indian pattern. There is an indigenous type of philosophical interpretation, which you find everywhere. Not that everyone knows it, is plugged into it, but it is potentially there everywhere. I wonder about the situation in Africa along these lines. Does there now exist an indigenous pattern of philosophizing, so that no matter where you go in sub-Saharan Africa, you might find someone who interprets things in the way you would interpret them?

Kwame Gyekye: In the traditional setting, we had a local wise man. Still, certain individuals in the community stand out as the thinkers. It is these thinkers who have originated the proverbs which are common in African communities. These proverbs contain earlier philosophical thought. They are common, and so are the myths and folktales and religious songs and the funeral dirges. They give a great deal of insight into the people's eschatology, physics, and so on. These are common. Does that answer your question?

Fred Morgan: Not exactly.

Myrtle Langley: I wanted to make another point about India. While not disagreeing with what you have said about the similarities, I do think we have a situation in India very different from Africa. Think of the caste system and the Aryan invasion; and think of the vast literature of India, impossible of comparison, as it were, with African oral traditions. I see the other point, where these differences will put a brake on how far we go with the similarities.

Angela Burr: I think people overemphasize the influence of the scriptures in India on the average local villager, who knows nothing about what Fred has been discussing, concepts like karma, according to which people evaluate actions in terms of their karmic sequence of events. How they interpret and use this theory varies, depending on which group you're talking to; but most of them operate with the concept in some way. They say, "We're on top of this tomorrow because of something our ancestors did 10,000 years ago." Or, "Two thousand years ago, our ancestors did something which was bad, and therefore . . ."

Myrtle Langley: I'm not disputing that side of it at all; but when you come to the unifying, I'm sure there is a degree to which it is imposed often on those people.

Unidentified Speaker: Of course, in India you did have political unification at various points.

Angela Burr: Yes, but most of the studies came after 1858, when Britain took over the entire nation.

Myrtle Langley: But then, you have 3500 years of some kind of unification process in India against one hundred years in Africa.

James Dickie: I would say it was only in the latter part of the rule of the sixth and last of the great Moguls that India achieved anything like political unity. The British finally unified the—I won't say the country, because I'm convinced India is not a country—finally unified the continent by means of railways and a legal and political system, and thereby they conferred on India a false identity, which is the origin of all the troubles, including the present one.

Unidentified Speaker: The reverse thing seems to be happening in Africa. It seems that, since there is a diversity of colonial powers, now Africa is attempting to unify under its own kind of reactive power to that colonial situation.

Kurt Johnson: Is it possible to come back to your point which got lost? Is there a pan-African consciousness which is now developing due to people being educated by a common tradition?

Kwame Gyekye: Yes. A recent book, the establishment of two or three journals on philosophy, plus a number of journals on African religion, are investigating this. For instance, right now there is an inter-African council of philosophy, meeting from time to time, people from different African countries. We talk about these things, then go back to do more research into the available peoples. One particular friend of mine, Dr. Odera Oruka, at the University of Nairobi, is constructing an African philosophy. But his other project is just to go to an elderly man, who is well-known as a wise man, and to ask him to say what he thinks about God or faith and so on, without interrupting at all. This pan-African philosophical consciousness expresses itself in works on African general philosophy published at the University of Ife, edited by the chairman of the Department of Philosophy. While some of the articles focus on specific African peoples, and the differences are brought up, you will find from time to time the other perspective is there from the African scholars. An English professor of philosophy in Botswana wrote a very interesting article in this journal, "Is There an African Philosophy?" It was a brilliantly argued paper.

Warren Lewis: But it is your theory, isn't it, Kwame, that whatever philosophical pan-Africanism is developing right now has roots in a subliminal, common, sub-Saharan African perspective of God and man, the soul, matter and reality. That is what a lot of people here don't agree with you on. I'm sure this is terribly oversimplified, but if you were willing to stick your neck out on the subject of God or evil or what not, with this basic theory, and say, "*This* is the common point of view in most of Africa," we could get a clear debate on the issue. I presume there will be exceptions to prove the rule, which you would be willing to admit. But it follows that anyone who wants to disagree with you ought to be able to say, "Yes, but look: there is this group here and this group there, and this other group somewhere else, and they don't hold your point of view." Then, if enough people could stone you with sufficient information, your hypothesis would fall, wouldn't it? But I don't hear anybody doing that.

Myrtle Langley: One can't do that, unless each one of us here were to know an African people well enough in order to be able to offer something in refutation. We might give a generalization to counter a generalization, but I don't think we can do that either.

Warren Lewis: Are you saying in terms of methodology of the study of African religion, that we are not yet to the point where we know enough different groups to test the hypothesis?

Myrtle Langley: We here, now, don't.

Angela Burr: Apparent differences on the surface don't mean that, on a deeper level, there isn't any unity underneath. One of the most famous books written in anthropology since 1959 is Sir Edmund Leach's *Highland Burma,* which is the study of two groups, the Verchung and the Pitchien, in highland Burma. The two groups are fundamentally different cultures; one is egalitarian and the other is extremely hierarchical. They live side by side, and I think that they are even mixed. If you use the kinds of models Fred would use, they appear to be very different and seem to have nothing in common. But Leach shows, in fact, underneath these two total differences they are operating on the same political and cultural model. In certain situations, the Verchung become Pitchien, because it is worth their while; and, in other situations, from the outside they appear different, but on the deep-structure level, they are similar. It may well be that this is what you really have to look at in Africa on the underlying cultural level.

Myrtle Langley: You could take that a bit further in our debate now: we are using the word "religion" and the word "philosophy." When we were talking about the Indian situation against the African, we were in danger of confusion, because Kwame was talking about constructing philosophy. But it seems to me that the people on the ground, who have their religion, may not be the ones who articulate the similarities. As soon as you go to the literature, you get a philosopher who is systematizing on bases spread throughout the continent. Thus, you still have the diversity you are talking about in India. We have to distinguish between the structuralists and the functionalists.

Fred Welbourn: I can *feel* the difference between traditional African culture and contemporary Western culture. One is communal and the other is individualistic. It seems to me that it is at this level the pan-African system will have to develop. Take one specific point. Kwame has said that all African people believe in a creator god. But if we take just one example, P'Bitek Okot, talking about his own people in Central Africa, he says that for them there are no spirits higher than the clan spirits; there is no creation, and no high creator god. This one example is enough to throw doubts on the analysis. And we can take the other great issue—that of the living dead, the ancestors. Most writers on African religion say that all African people have an ancestor cult. The Maasai have no ancestor cult, and there are other people who haven't. I don't mean to say, however, that if they have no creator god or no ancestral cult, that it means that they don't have this communal feel which one does find generally.

Harold Turner: I think the different kinds of groups Fred and you have been referring to might provide a good starting point for looking for generalities in African peoples and their religions somewhere between the individual tribe and Kwame's general overview, for which I have a lot of sympathy. I think that there is something like "Africanness," which does rub off across all the people of Africa. You can smell it, even if you can't locate it. But in between the particular tribe and the whole of Black Africa, we have to see the obvious groupings according to their cultural level; the hunter-gatherers, the planters, the animal breeders, and, as Fred was pointing out, not just confining ourselves to the study of Africa, but taking in similar cultural levels beyond Africa. You will probably find that the Congo Pygmies might have more in common with the Eskimo than with surrounding planter peoples in Africa. This is just what the most fruitful book on the subject recently has done—a study in what he calls ethno-philosophy by Wilhelm Duprès, *Religion in Primitive Culture.* It's a book about religion in primitive culture, not primitive religions, but religion in primitive cultures. He has taken as his two key case studies the Eskimo and the Bambuti, because of their basic cultural level as hunter-gatherers—the very first level, where the environment is not manipulated at all, but one takes it as one finds it. There are other peoples in Africa like that. This might be the first level of grouping at which to explore African generalities, and then other equivalent culture groupings, the animal breeders, and so on. Taking them together across Africa, you could get something in common, and work from that to the next level.

Myrtle Langley: Harold, how do you distinguish what you call "Africanness," that you smell, as it were, from Africa? Is it not something of primary religion, in fact, as we see it in Africa today, but which we could also smell elsewhere?

Harold Turner: Yes, I think it is right to go about this in overall terms of primal religions. To write about Africa as if it were something peculiar that you can't put in world categories, is an insult to Africa. It's human, that is where we should start; not that it is African, but that it is human.

Angela Burr: Then what about music as something intrinsically African which is given to the world? Some people would say the African attitude to music is basically genetic, an experience field, which Westerners, perhaps, don't have.

Myrtle Langley: I would say that one finds that in certain parts of Africa and not in others; it may have come from one part of Africa.

Angela Burr: But a certain basic feel through and for music, I guess, comes mostly from West Africa, where the American Blacks came from. But from what I know about East Africa, the Ganda and the Soga, these people have an incredibly felt music, in a degree that I could never hope to feel. It is something cultural that this particular group of people have given; it is obviously something they have taken with them from Africa to America, where it has rubbed off on the whites.

Michael Wingfield-Digby (Schoolmaster at Malvern, England; Student of African Religion): There is a confusion in all of this between religion and philosophy, which worries me a bit. Would you care to comment?

Kwame Gyekye: I am trying not to confuse philosophy and religion; neither do I want to impose European-Western intellectual categories on African peoples. Far from that! A section of the book I am writing shows that most of us, if not all, had our philosophical training in a Western intellectual environment, and points to the problem of how to get rid of these conceptual influences. I see that the scholar would have to be very much aware and very cautious that he does not put African thought systems into Western conceptual pigeonholes. The danger of studying African thought from a Western point of view is there. But this is not what I am trying to do at all. In fact, I'm studying the original, indigenous, aboriginal thought systems of the African peoples. Someone mentioned Godan-su. I said in my paper that, long before any Akan or African scholar read Plato or St. Augustine or Descartes, long before the Bible reached our peoples, our peoples maintained that a man has a soul and a body. This is not something that has come to us from the missionaries and their Bibles.

Irving Hexham: On this point, of man having a soul and a body, Fred brought up the point that the Maasai do not have "the living dead," and that the Luo do not have a high god. Would you like to respond to that? Because you just said all African peoples have these things, but here are two instances where these particular groups don't have them. How do you deal with that?

Kwame Gyekye: In such a case, one has to consider the sources. If possible, if the area is accessible, one has to do one's own original research there, in an attempt either to confirm such a statement or to refute it.

Angela Burr: But, then, if it is only one or maybe two particular instances which contradict the generalization, I'd think you would have to look at the particular socio-cultural realities amongst the Luo which might explain why they don't fit into the generalizations. One expects exceptions, and one would look at particulars. That you can find one example which doesn't fit, doesn't mean it is not a meaningful generalization. If you have 200 religions and you get under 12 percent exceptions, you are O.K. from a statistical point of view.

Harold Turner: One thing that worries me is that we're not acknowledging the many different languages there are in Africa. Difference in language is the normal thing to find; why should we not find difference in religion, including absence of a High God? There seem to be two mind-sets at work on the same problem: some people value the concept of "Africanness," and some people value the concept of humanity. Some people value diversity, and some people value unity or unification. One can't help think that the entire study as projected is inevitably influenced by how people approach it.

Eileen Barker: To repeat the question another way, what are the similarities and what are the differences? There are a whole lot of different variables and inputs that go into a culture's believing one particular set of beliefs. If we hold the variable which we think is important as the independent variable for a particular study, as, let us say, the geographical location on the continent, we look at who the peasants are, see how the peasants fit together, and whether they have similar beliefs. But, obviously, to try to find a unicausal reason for some set of beliefs is no good; you are going to have overlaps. So, we've got to decide then how much statistical variation we can allow, which can be eaten up, as it were, by other variables, which can account for the differences. There is always going to be such a terrible sprawl; there is always going to be something we don't understand; there will be things like language, the mode of production, the culture, the missionaries who have been there, what the climate happens to be, the number of people that are living together, the sorts of communication networks—add to the list as you wish.

There are similarities and differences, of course there are; but it depends on how we draw the boundary, what we are going to call religion, and whether by definition religion is believing in a transcendental God. In that case you get one set of answers; but if, by definition, religion functions to produce a cohesion, is a glue for a group of people, you get another set of answers. Similarly, if one tries to explain or describe according to particular variables, we are in danger of question-begging, looking for particular things, and asking one too-limited question, rather than communicating with each other, because somebody else is asking another question. If we go back to the set of questions Warren asked us yesterday, we'll get a different set of answers. If we work on the ones Kwame has given us; and again, if we turn to the ones Fred has given us; and there's probably another set if we come to Myrtle's—that is good. They are all parts of reality, but we are not meeting each other. We have to get straight what it is we are asking at any particular point.

Irving Hexham: Which brings us back to the question of definition, or does it?

Eileen Barker: Not necessarily. If we want to see what African religions have in common, that is our question. Then we say: A large proportion of them seems to accept the idea of the living dead. Next we ask: Which of them does not? Why do they not? What are the variables? Is it because they are hunters or gatherers, or is it because of something else? Then we actually look at the situation, at what they have in common, at what they share with Hindu religions, and so forth. This keeps our inquiry functional and saves it from bogging down in definitions.

But may I break off, and ask you a question, Irving? In the beginning yesterday, you said you had been to the Seminary, and you had heard how they had been talking about African religions, and that they had done it all wrong, and you told them so. Then they graciously turned around and asked you to show them the right way. Now, to really be dirty, tell me what have we done so far...

Warren Lewis: To show us what is right!

Eileen Barker: What haven't we done that we should do?

Irving Hexham: The thing that struck me was that Warren was looking at a unified system of African religion, whereas I tend to think in terms of the other viewpoint which Fred represents: that there are many religions in Africa, and that one can neither reduce them to, nor synthesize, one African religion out of the many. This is a subject which I think needs further debate, and some of the debate today has come along these lines. I think there is a tendency in the debate, however, for us to get trapped in an ethno-phenomenological present, where we omit the historical dimension, and where we are not really asking methodological questions. This is why our final session is to be on methodology. We do seem to be talking at cross-purposes here. One needs to define, not the word "religion," but what we are looking at as well, and what the question is. My own feeling about Africa is that there may be an emerging African religiousness which reflects African values, which is now being expressed by Kwame and others, whereas it wasn't there in the past, as a unified system. If you look back at African traditional religion, you find different groups; some people read back into the past and say, "They all believed the same thing." But I don't think you are going to find it in the past. You may find it in the future, and I think we are maybe at that point.

Kurt Johnson: That brings up another point. Kwame, in your paper you said several times: "I find that this no longer has validity in the modern situation." What then becomes of, and has become of, indigenous African religion? What is modern African religion? What represents Africa, Africanness, the living practice of African religions? Beyond that, as was pointed out in Barrytown, there are really two tiers—the tier which is indigenous African, and the historical tier of Christianity and Islam.

Sandro Trabucchi (Former Missionary in Uganda, now teaching at Missionary Institute, London, England): This is exactly what I was asking this morning. What do you mean by "African?" Do you mean geography, or the color of the skins, or don't you mean contemporary religions now existing on the soil of Africa, no matter who is living them?

Irving Hexham: I would want to say we are talking about religions in that geographical area we name "Africa," whatever it is.

Myrtle Langley: I agree fundamentally with what Eileen has said here. Some of our talking at cross-purposes comes from our being pitted against each other in a debate about one or many African religions. Whereas some are talking about pan-Africanness, African consciousness, and a search for identity in Africa, which is leading to an African religion, others are talking about methodology about religions.

Warren Lewis: The full agenda is being asked for, in a sense, and this is what I meant last evening when I said Africa has been theologically "ignored." Whatever the religion of sub-Saharan Black Africa is, and whatever cross-fertilizing of it Christianity and Islam have done, whether it is a unified experience or a radically pluralistic experience, or what not, it does not impinge upon the Western theologians of my acquaintance as a resource for theological reflection. You can still get away with quoting Plato and Aristotle, and prove your point as handily as you could by quoting St. Paul or St. John, but the idea that we have something to learn from Africa has not yet dawned on us.

It is of interest to me, because I work for a man who teaches his followers and employees that we must take with absolute seriousness the revelatory quality of everybody's religion. I have a professional-theological mandate to know what that is in Africa and to make something of it. That's my agenda. Now, Kwame comes along and indicates there is a substratum of Black African religion. Maybe there is and maybe there isn't. If there is, I'd love to have it defined and made available. If I can get it into a "canon of scriptures" so it would be a little more manageable and so I don't have to go to the wise people in every village to find out about it, that would be useful. I suppose that is not possible, is it? All I'm after is the mutual benefit of those of us who aren't Africans or anthropologists, and those who are. It would be nice to know what the Africans have to tell us theologically. The Congress we propose to stage in Africa would symbolize and facilitate that conversation—of Africa with the rest of the world.

Stanley Mogoba: The present state of the religion of the people of Africa is a very important one for everyone else, too.

Kwame mentioned the problem of a Western-oriented scholar bringing his training to his research and therefore extracting conclusions or looking for some things due to his training which are not there in the African religions. But there is another danger—the danger of interviewing people today in Africa, and concluding that theirs is the original religion. Some parts of Africa have had Christianity, Whites, Europeans, Western people for nearly 300 years. Another level of danger is the exact dating of what you are getting. For instance, are you getting African traditional religion in 1978 or in 1940 or in 1900 or in 1800 or in 1400? We are dealing here with oral evidence. The two consultations we have had in Africa lately, one with the Kra and one with the Sutu, on the African and Black theologies looked at current trends rather than the African traditional religion, to try to find out what is going on in the minds of the people now, what they believe in now, and what things they think are important in their lives.

James Dickie: The chronological factor interests me on historical grounds. If there be such a thing as common substrata to all African religion—and by African religion I am excluding the Islamic north, the legal religion—then it behooves us to account for those common substrata. To do that, we would have to posit several different things: Is there a common ancestor to all Negroes? Is there any pattern of tribal migrations that would account for it? What of the existence of trade routes? In Islam, it is very easy to account for the unity we have: a) a religion with a fervent dogmatic structure; b) we have a series of sensational military conquests; and c) we have a pattern of trade routes stretching over centuries. Is there anything like that in the history of Africa that would account for these substrata?

Irving Hexham: I think that is a very important point. In Africa, there are trade routes.

James Dickie: But they are controlled by the Muslims. Were there any indigenous trade routes?

Harold Turner: You mean trade routes before there were Muslims?

Irving Hexham: But the fact that there were Muslim trade routes is important. Non-Muslim religious ideas could spread along them.

Warren Lewis: It could very well be that the Muslims took over the existing trade routes and took over some other things that were already there when they came, such as autochthonous religious notions.

James Dickie: That would presuppose sophisticated means of communication. Were the Negroes skilled in naval architecture?

Harold Turner: There were internal trade routes.

Warren Lewis: And there are linguistic trade routes, too, that can be traced, aren't there?

Irving Hexham: I think the point we are getting into now is important. When we come to Africa, everyone asks what has Africa to offer? "Nothing very much, because African religion has been static; it has never changed." But I think that is not true: African religion has changed; it is still dynamic, and it is important to see its historical dimension. Now we are getting on to methodology.

Kurt Johnson: David, you have been studying messianic movements that are basically Christian, but among Black people in Africa. What is the character of that combination from both worlds?

David Shank (Doctoral student of Religious Studies, University of Aberdeen): The whole messianic dynamic in Africa is not all post-Christian. There are some important pre-Christian messianic roots in some of the African religious expressions. One of the places where this broke out was in the old Congo, Zaire. It's clear that in the Balongo the political structure contributed to the messianic dimension, and Christianity latched onto that. Or, they picked up certain dimensions in Christianity and created a whole new messianic dynamic which is parallel to some earlier Christian messianisms. But you can't say it was all post-Christian; there was a mix.

Kurt Johnson: How much of native religion is expressed in any of these movements?

David Shank: A great deal, but each one makes its own synthesis. Each one makes its own new mix. Each one is different, and you can't always draw generalizations. You have to study each individual messianic movement. I'm concentrating on messianic dynamics in the Ivory Coast. I thought I was going to study "African Messianism," but you just can't do that. So, I'm doing the Ivory Coast. Some other people have worked very intensely on Zaire messianism and the Kimbanguists. We are not at the point yet where we can say which things are common in African messianism. Coulong tried to do it, in a limited way; Bastide did it a little bit, but we're not that far along yet.

Bill Wells (Student, Unification Theological Seminary): In talking about substrata, it seems to me we are talking about a past-history substratum, or traditional religion substratum. In Barrytown, we observed that contemporary Africa is also dealing with Christianity and Islam in a dynamic way. The contemporary African consciousness is all three—Christian, Islamic, and traditional religion. If you look at contemporary political movements in Africa, they are willing to use all of Africa's religious traditions.

Irving Hexham: I think that is true. You touch on the point that we look at where it is going now; we also need to see where it has gone in the past. Christianity and Islam have been around a long time, in parts of Africa for over a thousand years. There has been an influence we must not overlook.

Eileen Barker: Can I come back to Warren? I just want to push this "why" a bit more. There seems to be this funny kind of paradox. You said in a nice little way, "Wouldn't it be fun if we could learn what we could get from the Africans!"—and if you could find the underlying bit of the Africans, you get that out and we add it to the rest of religion. And isn't this super fun! Now, that is putting it a bit crudely, I know, but this seems to be what you are looking for. Then we say, how do we find out what the fundamental nitty-gritty of African religion is, and James Dickie comes in and says we've got to find out about the trade routes, and Bill comes in and says perhaps the political thing has something to do with it. What *are* you after? Do you want to find out what has been sociologically, historically successful because of trade routes, because of language, assimilation, acculturation, political forces, and has made dragons or ancestor worship more or less successful? Or are you, as you seemed to be saying when I tried pushing you last night, into some sort of pluralistic ontological reality; are you looking for some real "extra" which you can add to your dragons, or are you after a pragmatic thing that works in the present situation?

Warren Lewis: Our friend Francis Botchway, who was at Barrytown, is interested in the one half of your dilemma there; that is to say, the half that will work. He is concerned to identify a Black African perspective which can verbalize itself sufficiently to hold up its end of the conversation on a tripartite base with Christianity and Islam. He is an ex-Christian Muslim headed back to being a Black African in a religious sense, all with a thoroughly Westernized topping! (I doubt if he would like my putting it that way.) He represents Black Africa in the theological debate towards producing a new religious reality, which will be African-Christian-Muslim in its roots, but then something transcending all three. So, of course, he is very interested in pragmatic success. He studies politics, after all!

I, however, specialize in the history of heretical sectarian movements and am, therefore, just as interested to find the ones that were not successful. Maybe the Maasai, who are unaware of their ancestors, are heretics on the African scene. Perhaps we need to declare unto them the way of the Lord more perfectly, only that would be better done by some other Black Africans! At any rate, there are surely "heretics" in Africa, and they are interesting in their own right, and will no doubt have something contributive to say as a result. I'm interested in both sides of your paradox, Eileen. I want to appreciate the Maasai for what they are and support Botchway in what he is doing.

Kurt Johnson: There is another dimension here too. Theology is looking for new ways of looking at the scriptures. When I was in Japan and Korea with Dr. Matczak, a Roman Catholic philosopher, who has also written extensively on the Divine Principle, he pointed out that in Reverend Moon you have available now the way a Confucianist interprets the Christian scriptures, and a systemized, Christian theology from the Confucianist point of view. If Plato, Aristotle, and Confucius are important in providing a philosophical slant for Christian theology, I think what Kwame is doing is equally important. If there are any fundamental philosophical bases in Africa that can be articulated, these have a value all their own in relationship to Christian scripture and eschatology.

Eileen Barker: Does that mean, then, that you are going to put out a dragnet to see what will come up? Anything that you can add to the general collection, is that your quest? But if you're looking for the generalizations, more than the specifics, you are going to lose in the overall picture the exciting 12 percent.

Warren Lewis: It would be a shame to lose the 12 percent! From my heretical perspective and background, loss of the 12 percent would cut me out of Christianity.

Kurt Johnson: In science, you have to deal with both the specifics and the generalities at the same time. You work with the "laws," always on the lookout for whatever doesn't fit the general picture.

Fred Welbourn: Are you going to collect a whole lot of religious ideas and put them in a nice sort of collage? Just as ideas? For this reason, your dragnet is going to pull up all sorts of ideas, but it's going to leave out the social context. You asked about Maasai being heretical. I have no doubt whatever the Maasai have no ancestor cult. They are nomads, who leave their ancestors behind and move on. This is not a heresy; this is part of their society. Surely this has got to be the way to see all African religion and philosophy—in social context. I wonder whether Kwame has thought about what sort of African he is going to fit his philosophy into. Do you think you can work out a philosophy regardless of social structures? Can you work out an African philosophy relevant to all social contexts?

Kwame Gyekye: As I have been saying, one must study social structures in various African societies in a comparative way to see if there are some underlying affinities. It seems to me to be the only approach. I am not by any means saying that every element of African religion is universal. But I am saying that if it is possible to see certain trends that are common, then we do have a basis for constructive philosophy.

Now, about the Luo people not believing in a High God: I'll give an example from Mbiti, on what he calls the African concept of time. I have asked people from that area whether Mbiti is right in saying that when you use the future tense in the couple of languages Mbiti used, you don't imply any period beyond two years. All of them have denied the correctness of Mbiti's conclusions; they say Mbiti is completely wrong. I'm saying, therefore, that if P'Bitek Okot says that the Luo people don't have the concept of the Supreme God, maybe he is wrong; just like Mbiti is wrong. One has to do further research there. And what you are saying about your absolute certainty that the Maasai don't have ancestor worship, it is possible that this is wrong.

Irving Hexham: I think on that note it would be good to break.

DISCUSSION ON METHODOLOGY

Irving Hexham: This session is entitled "A Structured Discussion of Methodology." I would like to reformulate some of the questions about methodology which have been raised in our earlier session and, perhaps, reveal something of my own agenda being involved in the whole program. About two years ago, there was a book published called *Zulu Symbolism and Thought Patterns* by a man called Berglund. In it he sets out a very nice description of Zulu religion and talks about the Zulu High God. The problem with it is this: When I read the historical accounts of the Zulus, it seems that before about 1860, there was no High God amongst the Zulus. In fact, there is quite a lot of evidence from missionaries and others going to the Zulus and asking them about God, that the Zulus were quite puzzled about what the missionaries were talking about; although some of them said that they had heard that some people do worship a God and use this word, they themselves don't know him.

There is also another interesting piece of evidence noticed by Calloway, one of the collectors of Zulu ethnology. He was asking some Zulus about the "lord of the sky," who approximates to a High God. The African who is giving him the information says, of course, "When we talk about lord of the sky, what we mean is really the chief; the chief was the lord of the sky, because he killed like lightning; but today, people have forgotten this." A couple of other informants say that, in the past, what was meant by the "lord of the sky" was the ascription to the chief of the powers of lightning, the power to kill arbitrarily. Over time, as the circumstances have changed, the power of the chiefs had declined, and they lost the power to kill at will. This phrase, "the lord of the sky," became literally a LORD of the SKY for the ordinary people, and at the same time, of course, the missionaries were coming in, preaching about a Lord in the sky, a God. Thus, traditionally, the Zulus saw in their past a High God who, in fact, existed only in their language. According to my reconstruction, then, why should one look back into the past and see a High God like this amongst the Zulus?

Another thing which seems clear to me is that when missionaries went to Africa, they spoke of Africans as being "people without a religion." "People without a religion" are very similar to people described by Aristotle as not having a soul—like women and slaves. Of course, many Africans were slaves; one of the justifications of slavery was that they didn't have souls. As a result of this, within the historical situation of Africa is a need for Africans to have High Gods, when Europeans asked them if they had a High God, because in having a High God they are men, and, therefore, they are not people who are inferior. There is a psychological and apologetical need built into the situation on the part of Africans in the 19th century to have a religion in some way similar to European religion.

I would like to argue that some of this comes out in Kwame's paper and in many of the pan-African arguments which go on today. One wants to find an African philosophy, to discover in African tradition historical roots which are like what you have in Europe or in India or in other places. This may or may not exist, but one must be aware of the pressure to find such a tradition. And, of course, if the Zulus didn't have a High God, that doesn't say anything bad about the Zulus. If on historical evidence it could be shown that there was no High God in early Zulu society, perhaps they were more like modern society; perhaps they were more secular, more like we are today.

Our respective ideologies are thus overplaying the whole discussion. We have questions of unravelling the history, the present, and future situations; these three dimensions are working together.

Ninian Smart, in his inaugural lecture at Lancaster University, outlined four main dimensions of religious studies or methodologies, which I find useful. The first is the philosophical; one needs to examine the arguments within religions and look at religions philosophically. The second is the social; one needs to see how a religion works within its society and look at its social setting. The third is the psychological; one needs to ask questions about what religion does for the individual and how the individual responds to religion. The final one is the historical; one needs to know something about the development of the religious traditions, where they have come from and where the individuals in them come from. Taking these four methods, we can arrive at something like an approach to the study of religion.

In the study of African religion to date, we have been presented with philosophical and social studies in African religion which are placed in the present. The historical dimension is almost entirely missing, and the psychological dimension is just not being dealt with at all. It is important that more work be done in the historical dimension, for again, ideological reasons cause the tendency to look down upon Africa as a continent without a history. In fact, Africa has a very rich history, and this history must be made plain. Then African theologians can talk as equals with theologians from any tradition. But in discovering that history, there is no need, to my thought, to unify the African traditions. There are many African traditions, I suspect. There are possibly three major African traditions south of the Sahara: a West African, an East African, and a South African.

Finally, it seems to me that in studying African religion, as we have commented, we are looking at religions without scriptures. There is some of that in the West, as well; many of the new religious movements today, although they pay lip service to scriptures, essentially are religions without scriptures. They are in this way similar in their function and operation to African religions. One of the things that intrigued me in a debate at the Barrytown Seminary between a group of Evangelicals and a group of Unificationists, was that they did not seem to be talking to one another. A lot of the time, the Evangelicals were appealing to scripture, whereas members of the Unification Church were talking about other things. There was a level of communication which was not going on. McLuhan's distinction of "hot and cold" communication! In studying African religion, we face a similar problem of communication. With those thoughts, I would like to throw open the discussion to questions of methodology. How do we approach African religion?

Fred Morgan: In the Ninian Smart four-package of methodology you gave us, where do you situate in there the use of water in a religious rite, or a sacrifice in a religious rite, or prayer at an altar in religious usage? Is that philosophical, social, psychological, or historical?

Irving Hexham: I think Ninian would say that rites could be looked at in all four dimensions. Ninian would include the things you have mentioned. However, he doesn't think one can really define religion; all one can do is construct a model of what religion looks like. So he constructs his model which, I think, misses out on the dimension of commitment, which Fred has been talking about. I agree that dimension must be taken in, as well. I want to bring Fred's model and Ninian's together, and then open up the questions of methodology.

Warren Lewis: Could we refer again to what Fred said this morning, that if he could back up twenty years and have another go at it, he would like to study the reality of the world of the spirits in Africa? He said he wasn't quite sure what the methodology for mapping the spirit world might be, but that he was genuinely interested in its reality for the Africans. Asking the question in terms of serious methodology, how does one study the actual spirituality of African religion so as, presumably, to benefit from it? How do we study the apprehension of the spirit world historically, philosophically, socially, and psychologically in Africa?

Fred Welbourn: I think this is primarily a question of approach. Do you do your fieldwork with the basic assumption that the spirits are actually there? I think the point of departure would make a very great deal of difference as to what one would discover. I cannot myself see that one assumption is any more rational than the other; they are both totally legitimate.

Harold Turner: You can't discover what you firmly believe doesn't exist.

Bill Wells: Is it possible to assume that they are non-empirical, but that they do exist?

Fred Welbourn: If they are not empirical, I think you can't get in touch with them at all, can you?

Warren Lewis: If they are not, but the Africans do, then the answer is yes. (Laughter)

Eileen Barker: One should make many approaches when trying to understand an alien belief system. One just has to perform a very sincere opening of the self. You have to "resocialize" yourself. I personally find it extraordinarily difficult, but very challenging to do. When you are talking to people who see the world in a different way, you have to suspend your own beliefs; you have to try to get rid of preconceptions, be open as much as possible, try not to push everything into familiar phenomenological boxes. In sociology we say you have to use "empathic understanding."

I have a student studying the Children of God. He was out witnessing, "litmusing" they call it, selling things on the street, and he met somebody who was being very negative. Afterwards, he turned to the friend from the Children of God and said, "The devil's in him." But he told me he was absolutely astonished at what he said, because he doesn't actually believe in the devil; but, because he was performing the actions and doing the participant observation, he did really see the devil in this man in the middle of Oxford Street.

If we do open ourselves and suspend our rational, cognitive, and other presuppositions, then things do happen. I think any sociologist or anthropologist who has done this does find it to be true, although it is extraordinarily embarrassing sometimes. You suddenly find yourself in tears, or in some other strange condition, but, at the same time, there is something up there in your researcher's head which is aware that it is happening. It has got to be aware, so that you can go and write up your notes afterwards, in order to be able to communicate to other people. If you take on wholly and completely the worldview of the tribe you are studying, then you can't build a bridge to the people who don't see it their way. And there is no point in doing it if you become just another member of that community.

If we are to supply the Warrens of this world with a few more dragons and things, then we have got to learn a language which provides a bridge from one island of reality to the next island of reality. Now, you know how Warren makes mishmash with everything as his concern; but for the sociologist, the anthropologist, the social scientist, there is a continual dialectic between the "tummy stuff," as I call it, and the "head stuff." It is a very difficult thing to keep them apart; because if the tummy takes over, then you are lost, because you can't really communicate. But if the head takes over, then it is no good, because you haven't got hold of the thing there to communicate. Striking a balance comes only with experience, and it doesn't always come to everybody.

Fred Welbourn: A very good description, indeed, if I may say so, Eileen!

Irving Hexham: Ninian's description is one which has been drawn from the study of books, rather than getting out and getting your hands dirty.

Eileen Barker: Ninian's approach is necessary, too, but it is not sufficient. We have to get our hands, our minds, our tummies, and everything dirty, if we are to understand each other and how we perceive.

Having said what I have said about the worldviews, as though they were discrete, I'd like to correct that slightly. One way to make a bridge solves what a lot of social linguistics people complain about, as though people and languages were entirely separate. But you can be bi-lingual, and you can go from one to the other. It's a learning of bi-linguality. Even within a particular group there is an enormous amount of variety. People who are Muslims don't all see the world through the same set of Muslim glasses, just as people who are Christians don't all see it alike, or even Presbyterians, or any particular group. There is always an overlap, things that are shared and things that are not shared.

Irving Hexham: Perhaps Angela would like to comment on this, how much one can really build a bridge and how much it is a quantum jump. One jumps into a culture; one takes it on; one operates within it, and then one comes back to one's own, to do another jump, and so on. But I don't know if there is really a bridge.

Angela Burr: I think the gap has to widen when you come back, if you are really going to be objective. One must avoid becoming too involved, I think. I am all for less involvement, rather than too much, and it can be a real problem in terms of getting far enough away from people to do a study. The best anthropologists are usually not the terribly overt exhibitionist types. Those who don't get too involved can see better, I think.

Michael Wingfield-Digby: If one does not get involved, that excludes any kind of commitment. You are talking exclusively about academic study, aren't you?

Angela Burr: I am talking about going out into the field of work, coming back, and writing it up. You can write descriptions quite easily, but if you wish to become more analytic, and to put forward hypotheses, it's very difficult to do so if you have got all your friends crowding up your mind. I like to make people my friends, even if I am studying them; but those who are my friends I don't ask for information. Otherwise, it would be impossible ever to use them as statistics. When I was living in Thailand, I got general information about the culture from the people I was living with; but for real information about the village, I went around to other people.

Fred Welbourn: This in a way is not analogous to the African situation. If your study had been Zen Buddhism in Thailand, rather than Thai anthropology, you would have wanted to know the people intimately whom you studied. If you want to find out from experience what makes people tick spiritually, you have to experience and live and share with them.

Angela Burr: But I was, in so far as I lived in two different households, one with about 14 people in the house. All day I lived there; I ate their food; I used to go to Bangkok about once every three months. I didn't meet any English people. It was general absorption. I was trying to test certain theories, but I didn't do it on the people I was living with, because it is very difficult to think of them as a statistic. It depends on the individual of course. But I still have dreams about them.

Irving Hexham: That leads on from a general discussion of religion to a discussion of scientific methodology. How *does* one make an analysis and then a synthesis? How is this sort of research possible? This applies far beyond the study of religion. We are getting into quite deep water here.

Bill Wells: Does the anthropological approach really study and analyze religion as such, or does it rather catalogue and describe rites, rituals, customs, etc.?

Irving Hexham: That is why Ninian would have four dimensions. Anthropology would come generally under the social approach. But in addition, you must also have psychological study to bring it to wholeness. Fred, how do you get a holistic view of religion?

Fred Welbourn: Just the same as one gets a holistic view of humans in any way. But I want to challenge this idea that anthropologists don't get to the guts of religion. Look at Lienhardt's *Divinity and Experience.* It is all about how they feel, the insides of men. And Evans-Pritchard, who lived on the assumption that witchcraft works, found that it does. I'm quite clear that these two—and others as well—offer something much more than just description. They want to know what that religion means. Victor Turner, another example, got very deeply into the meaning of symbols at these three levels; one level is what it means to the people.

Michael Wingfield-Digby: Another who springs to mind, with tremendous sensibilities about Africans, is Laurence van der Post. I think he would not label himself as an anthropologist, but he has a kind of personal, individual sensitivity, and of course he spent most of his life among the people.

Irving Hexham: His material would provide source material for a discussion, though it isn't an analysis at all. Harold, would you like to comment on your views on methodology? How does one go about studying religion, and where does it get one?

Harold Turner: I agree very thoroughly with Ninian Smart's statement that the methodology must be plural, poly-methodal. But I don't think Ninian is plural enough. There are some important dimensions that were not in your list, and are not in his. I was just saying to myself, what have we heard thrown into the pool today? —psychology, sociology, anthropology; probably at political science we were on the edge of one which isn't normally in Ninian's group. We were on the edge of geography of religion, a very important and totally neglected thing, along with the climatic factor. The geographical factor as it influences religion needs to be followed up and applied much more widely, as well as the religious effect on geography, which people don't conceive of at all.

We have heard of "religious studies," which is hard to define, as we're all aware. There are many notable works: Mbiti, Parrinder, Idowu, and one could go on over the list. But my feeling is that more of that kind of thing will not make the breakthrough we are waiting for in the understanding of what I call "African primal religions." More interaction between these disciplines, and all of them admitting that they are all reductionist, including theology and religious studies, reducing things to one bit of the vision, one abstracted set of the aspects of a total reality, is all we humans can do. The day of the poly-person is really gone. We have to recognize that we are reductionists, and that is the first healthy step to take. Later, along the line, we have to turn to the other folk to correct our reductionisms, our abstractions. But in the first instance, we have to accept our reductionist limitations.

The study of African primal religions is waiting for a breakthrough. New depths and new kinds of analysis, with new equipment, with new categories, are on the way; I don't think these have appeared on the African scene to any great extent. Dr. Parrinder, for example, actually describes his work as "accumulated description, roughly systematized in a common-sense sort of way." Professor Mbiti's work, I think, is fundamentally the same. I don't think any more of that is going to make the breakthrough, thankful as we are for it and for all the anthropological ethnography without which we would be in very poor case. The anthropologists were there, thank God, and got what they could get in their screening. That is all we will ever have, in some cases.

I see the first signs of the breakthrough in what I call "religious ethnography." We begin to get beyond what I believe is a stalemate in Terrance Ranger's work. The stress is falling on the historical dimension, which has been neglected. But every human being and every culture has its unique history. This is quite exciting, though it's rather limited in terms of geography; Ranger and his associates, including an increasing number of African scholars, have applied it to central East Africa. I wish it could be applied more in West Africa and other parts. One is grateful for this new direction; we feel here is a whole new vista opening up. We take these religions more seriously; we can put them alongside other religious traditions in other parts of the world, where we have and are aware of the histories. They emerge as religions in the full sense.

To do the history of a people's religion you need double equipment; it's a two-legged discipline. If you do the history of philosophy, you need training in both disciplines to be fully professional, and if you are going to do the history of economics, you have got to be an economist as well as a historian. Many of us have to make do with one half of the needed equipment, and some very notable works have been made out of what I would call one-legged scholarship, particularly the anthropological ones. I think these people contributed something beyond the strict limits of the anthropological disciplines. Out of their own personal experience—the three referred to happened to be deeply religious men—they understood beyond their professional limitations.

We now need a deliberate pursuit of the history of religions, encouraging people to get training in both the disciplines. None of the great "historians of religions" in the 20th century has worked on the African field, partly because we have been hung up on the history of primal religions in general, and for a variety of other reasons. For one, Britons have been primarily interested in the great Asian cultures.

I was interested in what Professor Deotis Roberts said at the Barrytown conference in reference to his work at Howard University in the African Studies department. One of the limitations his Ph.D. candidates have is that they do not get an appreciation for the study of religion as religion—the kind of thing that Charles Long writes about, says Professor Roberts. I think what he means by the "study of religion as religion" is the religion of religion. There is the sociology of religion, the psychology of religion, the geography of religion, but what about the central thing—the religion of religion. In the analogous fields, this would correspond to the economics of economics: the central, basic, nitty-gritty of the economic behaviour of mankind.

Professor Roberts has put his finger on it and mentions Charles Long, which gives me the lead back to the people in Chicago standing behind him, whom I would regard as mentors for us all—Peter Gaba, Deli Abe, and Joachim Wach; and from Wach, back to where he came from in Marburg, and the great succession there of Otto and Heiler, and then, in later times, Menschen, and in other European places, Christensen and especially in Holland, van der Leeuw and Bleeker, and Eron de Hoekrans in Sweden. Mostly these are unknown in our circles here.

There are other younger men coming on in the States, like J.Z. Smith, in the same succession. It is going to be increasingly sad if this whole body of scholarship is not applied to Africa. The breakthrough I'm looking for has started in Africa; some people are doing it. Dr. Gaba in Ghana is equipped in this way. One of our own students at Aberdeen is working on the Mendi people in Sierra Leone with this kind of equipment.

It hit me clearly first when I was teaching in the United States. I had a very good student, now in Sierra Leone, who did an intensive course in the analytical study of the place of worship across all the religions. (That is a basic religious phenomenon with family resemblances, and you can get a typology, analyze its functions and its forms, trace its origins, and so on, working it out pretty scientifically as a special kind of equipment for that particular type of religious phenomenon.) This chap took up the places of worship among North American Indians in particular, and found there was an abundance of anthropological material, ethnography in the first instance. He couldn't encompass it all in the one term. Resources were tremendously rich. He and I were both absolutely astonished at the way it had just been crying out for a kind of analysis like this. It just dropped into our categories. It was almost phony; it was too good to be true. Now it mightn't always happen this way; but it opened my eyes to the need for taking some of the existing resources we have, which are very rich, and doing something further with them, as well as going out into the field, gathering more resources, and perhaps using a somewhat different net.

James Dickie: This is that Africa, still the dark continent, and after 100 years, just as opaque to us as it was to Stanley and Livingston.

Harold Turner: I do give the anthropologists more credit than that!

Irving Hexham: I agree that there is an immense amount of work to be done in the African context. In history, for example, though there are lots of group studies in Central Africa, East Africa and West Africa—in South Africa there is virtually nothing. The materials on religion in South Africa are very sparse. That is the place where they have had the most contact with whites, and yet it is the place where there is the least research really being done. It is also in some ways the area now where there is the greatest danger of research not being done, with Mozambique and Angola going Marxist, and the civil war in Rhodesia, which will greatly affect the religious situation.

Warren Lewis: With as much humility as a one-legged historian who is not an Africanist as well can exude, may I suggest that here, maybe, is where a Congress of African Religions in Africa comes in. We might all be of genuine service in drawing attention to those needs and new directions. Not, I suppose, that we could pack up and go over and solve all the problems; but if we could focus world academic and religious interest on these areas that have been ignored, we might do something worthwhile for ourselves and for Africa. This is why we at the Barrytown Seminary have asked you people to come together with us. Is it possible, and, if it is, how might we best go about it?

Fred Morgan: When I asked my earlier question about understanding the altar sacrifice, and the use of water, your answer made me feel foolish. You said you do it with the four categories. But, now, clearly, what I had in mind, the very question to which you are responding, Harold, is this one. It is not enough just to look at these matters from a philosophical, sociological, historical, and psychological perspective. How do you look at them religiously? How do you evaluate them for their religious content as such? This is what I hear you saying.

Harold Turner: That's it.

Warren Lewis: Without at the same time abdicating the use of the mind.

Harold Turner: Yes. Critically, scientifically.

Myrtle Langley: Rather than everybody coming down, as it were, on Africa (I mean it as a caricature!), would one of the ways forward be to ask that groundwork be done in some of the areas by qualified people? Then you would have something to start off from. The researcher would need a group of people to think it through with. That is only one starting point; otherwise it might only be another talk show.

Warren Lewis: Myrtle, when we addressed ourselves to this question in Barrytown, we came up with a three-stage approach:

the first was to assemble those people whom we most respected in terms of their methodological abilities in the field to identify the problems in concrete, specific ways. These are the people who know the people, who have contacts with people in Africa who could lead the way, mediate and translate. At this stage, there would be a time spent working together with a group of international scholars to clarify questions, set agendas, improve methodologies, and set out the work to be done.

Stage two would follow: Quite small teams of select persons, two to three people, would go to a variety of sites in Africa to explore the aspects settled upon in stage one. At this point, there is the possibility of two extremes to be avoided: academic tourism, on the one hand, and setting up a twenty-year program of in-depth study of African religions on the other hand. We would be happy to stimulate interest, commitment, and funding for projects like that, and the intellectual-spiritual riches they would yield. But that cannot be the immediate purpose of the congress.

Stage three, whether we would organize it in terms of North, West, East, and South gatherings first, or directly in terms of a general coming together, would be the communication of what had been discovered and rediscovered together in appreciation of African religion, with anyone who wants to come to the congress and take part in the conversation. That's what we came up with in Barrytown. We didn't say how we would pay for it, you understand, just that we thought that it would be nice.

Kurt Johnson: It might be worthwhile to ask Kwame his views on the state of research in this area in Africa. Would a number of people be open and receptive to Europeans coming to compare notes on somebody's agenda about African religion?

Kwame Gyekye: Plenty of Europeans have been coming a long time! (Laughter) There are quite a number of research works going on in Africa, by both African scholars and non-African scholars, right now. The advantage that the African scholars have over non-African scholars is facility in language. When one is studying religion, language is so important. I really admire Rattray, because he studied the Akan language; every page of his book is replete with faithful statements and accurate proberbs. After 45 years, his books are quite standard on Ashanti culture, traditions, and religion. I think that scholars could go to Africa and actually talk with priests at the shrines, and ask questions about their thing. I am sure that some of the diviners and priests would not like to tell you everything, but you will certainly get a lot together. You ask questions, some not so direct, and then put some order into what you hear from them. A lot of African scholars are already doing great work on African religions. They would help.

Irving Hexham: To what degree is there communication between the different African scholars in these areas, and where does it stop?

Kwame Gyekye: From time to time, an association of scholars on African religion does meet; there's an association of anthropologists, and so on. They meet, of course, present papers, and publish works. The main problem, as we said in Barrytown, is how to collate what has been recorded. We need to create an African religious testament. There is no African Qur'an, there is no Bible, no Torah. Religion is there, in the hearts of the people. But since we want to produce a document, what we have to do is bring these scholars together so they can work out whatever religious document for Africa, from the indigenous point of view, can be produced.

It will not be a document of Christian religion, not "African Christian theology," which Lugira was talking about, but "African theology." Of course, there may be some problem in separating the original African religious beliefs from possible accretions. For instance, I was discussing things with a wise man, and somebody said: "Oh yes, but the Bible says this and that!" But then I said, "No! No, I am not interested in what the Bible says; we learned about that in school. I just want to know what our own people, what our ancestors, said." Then they said, "Oh! O.K. if that is what you want, then let us put the Bible aside." We have to find a way of getting at the authentic, indigenous, aboriginal beliefs of the Africans.

Irving Hexham: Out of that kind of information, you make your philosophy. I wonder how Stanley reacts to that sort of suggestion, coming from a different part of Africa, where there has been a lot of discussion of African theology. Would you like to comment?

Stanley Mogoba: Yes. First of all, in answer to the question why so little has been produced in Africa, the defects are fairly clear, and the answer to that question is a very meaningful one. Both the missionaries and the colonial rulers from 1910 to today have not been encouraging this sort of thing. Not only that, but they have been killing any form of positive approach towards the past, towards things that are typically African. The people, as a result, have developed an attitude of looking down upon anything that is theirs. In plain language, the creative spirit has been killed among the people, so that the task in that part of the world is initially that of resuscitating, of reviving the people, so that they can be able to value their past. For the researcher, this constitutes a lot of problems.

You go there to research, but people won't be open to you. They won't let you know the things you want to know, because they don't think these things are important. They won't understand why you are interested in these things which are not important. There are also problems in that they fear, within the present political climate, anybody who works in that area. Anyone who asks a lot of questions is suspect, even on very innocent things, like, "How do you worship?" Particularly if you are white—and even if you are a foreign white—they are very suspicious. "What do you want this for? Perhaps you want to hand this over to the police!"

For the moment, the situation is not quite right for intensive research in that part of the world. This is why we believe that the primary task in that part of the country is to revive authentic Christianity. People would have a positive approach towards religion in the first place; and secondly, Christianity could be used to liberate them, politically, spiritually, mentally and in other ways. We believe, at that gut level, this is where the initial work has to be undertaken; all other work is consequent upon that.

Myrtle Langley: Perhaps area conferences might be what you would begin with. And may I add to what Stanley said that in doing interviewing work in some countries, your first project is to go to the office of the president, which can take months. Further, you would have to go out with people who are already involved, the scholars there. And again you must get involved with people themselves. The work I was doing dealt with the material about secret rites; I had to get information from people by being involved. I remember an old man saying to me, "Oh, you were a teacher; you were a 'melingo' in our area; so we have got confidence in you." If I had been an ordinary person with curiosity, I would never have got some of the material which I did get. It's a question of confidence. People don't want to be treated as curiosities, which has been so often the case in Africa. I don't intend to see just the problems, but you have to keep these things in mind.

Sandro Trabucchi: Is there an updated bibliography of what is already existing? I am sure there is a lot of material not classified anywhere, and very good things. What little I know of Uganda, I know of works from sixty, seventy, or eighty years ago, some published in the local paper in Uganda which started in 1911. There are beautiful descriptions of things which don't appear any more today, which even Africans don't know, especially the younger generation. The first thing, it appears to me, is to try to collect the existing material, lest we be doing research which has been done already. Especially when you think of Africa in three or more main languages: French, English, Spanish, Portuguese; and I have seen some good works in Italian, never quoted in the English bibliographies, never, never. A recent book, just published, fundamentally a study of Uganda, has seven hundred pages in Italian, and it is not quoted at all.

Eileen Barker: I would like to backtrack. Harold Turner is very right when he said that there is reductionism going on. There has to be. There is reductionism at all levels—vertical, horizontal, diagonal; the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. We all do our own bit, and there is a terrific need to synthesize things between the different levels. Sometimes one person can do both the social and the psychological at one time, perhaps, or get on the two legs that Harold was talking about. But there is such a waste of people repeating things or just doing it from their own perspective and not learning to look around corners and see things from different perspectives. People just don't come together! And even when they do, they all sort of shout at each other, being rude to each other, "You are daft because you haven't seen that!" Yet, that is something important in itself, because it stops us from thinking that we know all the answers and makes us realize that perhaps there are different ways of looking at things. If the Seminary could just use what is available, bring it together, and start working out what can be done with it, it might save us all some wasted time. There is a lovely sociology of what gets noticed and what doesn't.

Bill Wells: This question came up quite a bit as far as the bibliography question is concerned at our conference in Barrytown. As a consequence, when I got to London, I went to the SLAS library and discovered there is an entire room there filled with bibliographies. More than that, there is a quarterly journal which lists publications coming out in Africa. I very much see the point that there are books published about everything in Ghana, Nigeria, and the others. But in the terms of this conference, I couldn't find books that were specific to religion and cult, a bibliography of cultic ritual. We do need that, in terms of analysis for what we are doing; but, I really believe that we are into the problem more of analysis of material than a lack of material. We have tons of material that is completely unrecognised.

Irving Hexham: I think that is true, and I don't know a bibliography of religion in Africa.

Harold Turner: In general terms, there isn't one, no ongoing one is available. Various individuals have their own, as we have at Aberdeen; but it is not published.

Bill Wells: Most of the bibliographies I found have sections on religion. But I don't have a researcher's card.

Irving Hexham: That brings us round to something very practical. I'll remind you that, having looked at the past, we've come up with Kwame's question about the future. He is very much in the future. Although he presents one viewpoint of Africa's religious future, there are other competitors for African religion. There is also the pseudo-religion, Marxism, in southern Africa. I say "pseudo-religion," for however you want to call Marxism, there is this ideology which is certainly promoting a mythology in southern Africa, at least. This is the way in which the future is going. There are conflicts between emerging ideologies, and because people identify themselves in terms of their belief systems, it makes for a very exciting struggle for the new Africa in terms of the beliefs of Africa.

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION
September 5, 1978

Irving Hexham: It's time to wind things up. I'll hand it over to Warren who will tell you what we want to do.

Warren Lewis: As I indicated on our first evening together, we had a multiple purpose in inviting you here. We are projecting plans for Africa and a different, but related, set of plans for a Global Congress of World Religions. Some of us have already had to leave, but in taking their leave, have left me with several good words. Fred Welbourn for example, who left last night, said he is willing to help us get in touch with French Africanists, who unfortunately are not represented here this weekend. James Dickie has given me a ground list of the right people in Islam to get in touch with. This highly selective list is extremely appreciated.

James Dickie: The criterion is avoid governments like the plague. They would only recommend to you supine "yes men." So I have got in with private enterprise. (Laughter)

Warren Lewis: As we think towards our Global Congress, it now appears we will be moving along two tracks at the same time. The track that leads to Africa, and then a parallel track that runs by way of the various international groups involved in inter-religious dialogue, such as the World Congress of Faiths, which was represented yesterday among us by Marcus Braybrooke. Marcus has provided me with a list of people he will be happy to help us get in touch with. We are planning a "conference of the groups," which, he and I agreed yesterday, we might like to hold a year from now, in late September in New York. I brought you greetings from Terry Ranger the other evening. Now I'll put in the word from him that he would have uttered. When we were talking about these matters, Terry Ranger was concerned about the agenda of the Africa congress and who was going to set the agenda. Irving and I immediately offered to allow Terry to set the agenda, and he remembered in that moment never to criticize anybody lest you be invited to head the committee. (Laughter) But the agenda is a serious concern, and I'd like for us to talk about it for awhile. One subject that has come up recurrently is the question of bibliography. Bibliographies do exist, but it seems that a more or less exhaustive or combined bibliography on religion and religions in Africa perhaps does not exist. Might it be a good idea to undertake a bibliography project? The other main topic is our Africa agenda: who shall be there, and how will it work, what might the stages be. Father Trabucchi will now tell us about a somewhat similar meeting that was held three or four years ago in Africa.

Sandro Trabucchi: Yes, it was in August '73. There had been a so-called pan-African meeting. It was organized by the Catholic Church with representatives from other churches; we gathered at Kaba, on the outskirts of Kampala on Lake Victoria. We were thirty-five people, and all the speakers were African, except Father Shorter, whom some of you know. It was quite interesting, because we tried to be very down to earth; the most impressive talk was given by a practitioner of an African religion. He must have been about 70 years of age, and he told us a lot of things, although he said, "I can't tell you everything." Our idea was to know exactly what was going on in the field. He was telling us what takes place at night on many occasions in the outside parts of Kampala. For instance, Christians who maybe in the morning have been to church here and there, in the evening go to other sessions. They have a double way of living. The proceedings were published; a quite extensive bibliography had been prepared already. I could get a copy of those proceedings and the bibliography, also.

Harold Turner: The same year, the same thing was done by the World Council of Churches, and their report has been published, and the second leg of that is happening in ten days time in Aunde. There will be another report from that. The difficulty that emerges in this whole enterprise is whom to get as a spokesman? The WCC tended to rely on leaders from some of the new, African independent movements. But that is a very questionable procedure, I think. They did visit local shrines and talk with the practitioners and so on. Playing at it.

Warren Lewis: Is that tourism?

Harold Turner: It's tourism and it's playing at it. It's dangerous.

Warren Lewis: How can we not fall into that trap? Is it possible? Maybe it isn't possible to avoid that kind of thing.

Harold Turner: I think it is quite impossible in a little, neat, quick package you pick up in this conference procedure. It really is impossible and it is irresponsible to pretend otherwise. And also, we are doing the whole thing initially in a thoroughly Western framework. The conference procedure is a Western structure which we impose on the Western world. And it's questionable even in our own context. I think it is some kind of disease of solving problems by conferences. That is not where they get solved. It works the other way round: people who succeed at this get stuck into it in obscure places and stick with it for a long time-period, with very deep commitment. We gather here, rushing away from the things we're really committed to; and we talk, or pretend to, and then rush back to things we are really committed to, and that is where the real action occurs. This all tends to be a little phony. Not that one doesn't appreciate it. But I think we should be realistic about it, especially when we impose it on the particular field of African religion, which cannot be caught in this net. That sounds very negative, but, I admit, I'm still going to a conference in ten days time. And so, one gets caught up in this both ways; but one feels uncomfortable about it. But I do think we should still keep talking about it.

Warren Lewis: Surely there *is* a way to do it right.

Harold Turner: I think being very well aware of our limitations and the dangers at the same time; at least, if we keep that in mind, it's some saving grace. I hope that isn't too negative.

Warren Lewis: No, I'm glad you said that. I could tell from our conversation at breakfast that you were either going to have to say what you said or get indigestion, and I'd much rather have you say it.

Harold Turner: But there are other things which might be said, more positive. African traditional religion, as we have heard, is so varied, so extensive; it's not articulated to itself, it doesn't understand itself, much less have spokesmen who can talk in our terms to the rest of the world. How do you get hold of it? So much of it is gone forever; so much of it is corrupted and already accommodated, carrying on in bits and pieces; so much of it will go on forever, as the ongoing worldview which we all inherit—the primal religious heritage, as I call it. If only we could identify it! It might go on forever as our legacy; but as public, viable, religious systems, so much of it is already lost. It might be an idea to try to identify, for a start, some of the more lasting, public, still viable religious systems which do yet occur in Africa. These show that African religions have a history, because they are having a history visible at the moment, a history of change, accommodation, and so on. Some places do still have them. Dave was mentioning Dahomey earlier.

David Shank: You mean the Fon divining cult? It is still a very going concern at the present time in Dahomey.

Harold Turner: Dealing with the contemporary problems of the people, but in traditional terms, is authentic work. That can be identified! Peter McKenzie might have been here, but he couldn't be, because this summer he is studying the ongoing traditional shrines among the Yoruba in Nigeria, on the basis of his having worked and having lived in Nigeria for five years. Dr. Daneel has had the unique entry, which the white man has never before had nor will have again, to the Mwali cult, or Great Shona cult, in

Rhodesia. He has had Mwali speak to him through the oracle. There are certain places which could be identified; and this is primal religion in its living form, as authentic as you would get it, and showing the toughness of it all. We tend to think of it all eroding; and in the long run, I think it is all archaic. It has no long-term future as a public system. No modern African nation could conceivably take it as the public, spiritual process of religion. Modern life simply cannot deal with tribal religion; no nation has really tried, though one or two politicians have made some use of it. But there are spots, perhaps, where we can learn something and it would still be identifiable; nor would we be just talking about Africa. That is the only concrete thing I might recommend.

Sandro Trabucchi: If I may add one word: A meeting of this type could take place on African soil and should make extensive use of men who are on the spot, rather than bringing in people from outside so much. I have attended many of these meetings of foreigners in Uganda; it is nice to listen to the speakers, but they go away and you remain with your problems; or they come in and don't know the situation. They talk just about the clouds. .! If we are going to have a meeting in a specific area of Africa, let us try to find out some people more or less competent, perhaps less competent from a scholarly point of view, but who are more down-to-earth there. Let us use them and, if necessary, give them some guidance and perhaps (this is more practical) some financial support. Let them go their own way, without imposing our own structure or our own proceedings. For instance, in Nairobi in '75, the World Council of Churches, according to my own understanding, has been a tremendous flop. Such a huge organization, and the poverty of the people around, but thousands were spent, and for what? What has come out? It is nice that the people can understand it in London or in Paris or New York, but no good thing came out of it for Africa.

John Sonneborn (Doctoral Student, Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York)*:* Is it not a primary topic for a Congress of Religions how religions interact with each other, rather than simply to classify and study each of them or all at once in the abstract? Wouldn't it be feasible for the participants in an African Congress to ask how they are relating to each other, how the religions and theologies which have come in from other countries relate to Africa, the new governments, and the newly-formed nations composed of many tribes? Then it would be legitimate to have leading practitioners of the local religions speak in this context, without having to be probed deeply into their own religion or using an academic, sociological language they might not be comfortable with. That might be something that hasn't been done.

Stanley Mogoba: Yes, I was going to say that this area is multitiered. There is the tier of African traditional religion, then there is one of African theology, then one of Black theology. They are all distinct tiers; they are all related, so that you have to involve them all in a discussion. Of these three tiers, African traditional religion is the most urgent concern, because it is disappearing. Time is important here. Something must be done quickly, because most of the people who have the knowledge are going. However, most of the people who can give the best information in this area are people who may not be very articulate, and therefore may not want to come to a conference; or if they were to come, they would not be very useful at the conference.

So I suggest that between now and the time of the conference the right people be asked in various parts of Africa to contribute reports from research that is being done and to encourage as many people as possible to do local research, to interview, to live with, to document the actual religions of Africa. That is something a person could bring to a conference like this. Some independent church leaders would also be useful, if they were interviewed, or asked to come and speak. Many of them would appreciate a chance to speak. Most of them, of course, would have to speak through an interpreter. We would want to arrange for competent interpreters, so the people could use their original language.

An example of such a person is the very interesting Rev. Modisi, leader of a new, independent church now thriving in Soweto. He has made an impact amongst the higher, educated levels, which in the past has not been possible. Most of the people at those levels who were associated with independent churches were not proud enough to admit it in public. But now this man has made a breakthrough, and people come out and associate with him quite openly. I think a man like that is the sort of person we would want to invite to the conference and one who could participate effectively in it.

David Shank: This trend was reported to us in Aberdeen last week: "Celestial Christianity" in Nigeria is making this kind of breakthrough, as well as Independent Christianity, which was always despised; it is now reaching a new social class. Isn't that the message you got, too, Harold?

Harold Turner: Yes, the deputy vice-chancellor of the university has joined.

David Shank and Harold Turner: But "independent churches" are not traditional African religion.

Stanley Mogoba: May I say about such meetings, these are areas in which you would have to be very careful. The government is very unsympathetic towards certain political movements, but with the African religions, African theology, and independent churches, they are quite happy. Anybody can organize them. But I wouldn't be the right person to organize this, because the government reads certain things into what we do. It is possible to do this sort of thing, but you have got to be careful who does it. It's a problem, but one that can be solved.

Myrtle Langley: We've got somebody like Bethel Okot in Nairobi, who would be very good, if we could get him to find time to do it. I support everything Stanley has said, and possibly go one step further. Perhaps the people who have been doing this work could take one person just before or just after the conference to the area where they have been doing their work. Just one person, not a group, might go out with one researcher, and this would be a way for a person to get in and see something of what actually happens. Then there is a question of the different seasons. For certain things happening, I've found, for example, the August season wouldn't be any good in certain parts of East Africa; it's December in which a lot of the rites happen, depending on the rains, and all that. It would be different in West Africa, I think, altogether.

Warren Lewis: Harold, how would you respond to this: If really good people, who know what they are doing, were to take one or two persons from Europe or America or some other place, and introduce them to an authentic situation, would that work? There would not be a busload of tourists who get out and watch a medicine man do his thing for an afternoon and then get in the bus again and move on to the next stop. Would a congress that met one person at a time all over Africa, so to speak, be a step towards healing the conference disease?

Myrtle Langley: I wasn't quite thinking of one person only. If you have it in a good area and you select your people from different parts of the surrounding area, say within a few hundred miles, and then a person goes out either before or after the conference with people who are prepared so that it is all integrated into a proper program, that might be very profitable. I have no problem taking one or two visitors with me, when I already have the confidence of the people in my area. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

Warren Lewis: Not at all! Thank you; that is even better. Irving, Myrtle's suggestion seems to go along with your idea of structures, times, and seasons in terms of a multiple congress with an East, a West, a South, and perhaps a North focus.

Irving Hexham: Yes, I think that is the obvious way to do it.

Warren Lewis: Especially since the geography of religion, the climate of religion, the rain season of religion is different in East Africa from West Africa, we wouldn't expect there to be a uniformity of religious practice.

Eileen Barker: Warren, may I come back to being difficult again? I'm just sitting here wondering, still, what you are trying to do, what your basic question is. Are we discussing how do we find out about African religion? Is that really what you want to do? I mean, there are anthropologists, specialists who are doing this over a long period of time, and in methodologically more sophisticated ways than you could possibly hope to do it. If you want to produce odd flavours at the conference, there are films made by African societies for television which would probably provide a far better picture than somebody coming back from tramping through the bush watching the Bonga-wonga doing something or other. There are a whole lot of books and other available material, though the material isn't being used. I think you have been saying that you want the use of this knowledge, and you seem to be looking at how we can achieve this knowledge. Would I be right in saying that what you really want to do is use the knowledge if you can get it? Therefore, the problem for the conference is not production of the knowledge from primary sources so much as just getting hold of it.

Harold is absolutely right; it is absolutely ridiculous for us to think we can go out, even in a year, and do something original. It's a very difficult job, finding out about other peoples' lives and religions, and understanding what they are doing. But there are people already doing this, though a lot of the stuff they produce just isn't being used. What I think you want to do, is use it, plug into it; so the best thing for you to do is find out how this knowledge can best be communicated to people who might want to use it.

But the first question I think you want to get at—and perhaps you have said it a thousand times, and I know I have asked it a thousand times—is, why do you want to know? What do you want to do with it? Then you can find out what it is you want to know, and how you can get it. I've stopped.

Harold Turner: I'm glad you started.

Warren Lewis: I agree with everything you have said. If I *can* answer your question, it would be to say that a main thing about being human is that we talk to one another. I'm attempting to expand

and intensify the conversation. I want Africa to talk to us theologically and I want to tune the world's ears to what the Africans are saying.

Eileen Barker: Does that mean the whole conversation you want to produce is to discuss what African religions have to offer? In that case, the question is how do you find out what African religions have to offer; and in that case, I would think asking people like Myrtle to give papers on specific topics, which she has worked at for years, or looking at some of these films, which are excellent, perhaps just having a film show, would show far more than somebody standing up and talking about all the different aids of first-year undergraduate textbooks. (I'm sure Angela would give you a long list of those; I remember ploughing through them all.) There is an absolutely fascinating wealth of stuff available. I used to go to a seminar every Friday at University College on African Religion; each week, all these experts were sitting there, producing more and more, an enormous horde of stuff. It's there, but it seems daft to try to say how we can get at it. You do have to get it, but not by going into the bush with a tape recorder.

Warren Lewis: No, I am not recommending that we do that, but that we depend upon those who have gone to the bush with a tape recorder. But beyond that, I want to arrange actual conversations: Africans, in Africa, on their own turf and in their own terms, talking to and teaching one another and others about their own experience of religion. It's more than reading an undergraduate text; and great as those movies must be—and let's show some—people meeting people is better than people watching people in a film.

Eileen Barker: Then in selecting the right people and places, you have got to be terribly clear of what it is you want to do. There is so much good there you could pick up, and an awful lot of rubbish. You have got to keep asking what the question is, in order to find out what is the answer.

Warren Lewis: You are siding with Terry Ranger, aren't you? Would you like to be on the agenda committee? (Laughter)

Myrtle Langley: I think that preparation is the crucial thing.

Irving Hexham: I would like to say something. I'd like the tape recorder off, please.

(He speaks intensely, making reference to specific individuals and events, on the value of conferences as the place where people do sometimes change their minds about important issues.)

Kurt Johnson: I think you are trying to do something fresh and new in an area in which it is hard to do anything fresh and new, in an area that is really notorious now for building cynicism about relevance both to scholars and to other living people. It is going to take the kind of homework where you study everything that has been done, decide why it wasn't so good as it might have been, and discover as well the things done that were worthwhile. I think the question you have to ask—again from our experience in doing minority-poverty things in the U.S., where we can never stop asking the question of literally everything we do—is this: "Is this worthwhile?" What services can you perform, not only in the sense of what service can the organized follow-up from the conference perform. I would suggest a spectrum of things: further academic research, information dissemination, information gathering, and one thing which hasn't been brought up but which I think would be relevant to people like Bill Jones and Deotis Roberts: how does a conference like this germinate the idea of getting seminaries to meet the need of teaching African religions? That is where Eileen's concern for source materials comes in again, and the question of how to teach African religions. The conference could provide a beginning of a more universal teaching of African religions in seminaries and in graduate schools.

Harold Turner: I'll have to follow on from that, because I have already been thinking on those lines, and didn't know whether this was the place to talk about it. I have just been involved in working out a scheme for something of this kind for a very large American seminary. So it occurred to me, why shouldn't the Unification Seminary be the first in North America, and probably in the Western world, to introduce work in this area in its normal training program?

A bibliographical undertaking of this kind would be a major operation; since that sort of thing is my main activity at the moment in a parallel field, I know only too well the problems in mechanics, the labor of it; it is not to be undertaken lightly. But it seems to me that there would be a very good argument from the Unification Church point of view, indeed, from all our points of view, for something like this to be worked out, in a modest way to start with, perhaps, at the Unification Seminary.

One might start with a basic course, an introduction to our common, primal religious heritage around the world. We've all got it one way or the other; all the major religions contain elements of the primal religion. It is now operating very visibly in some ways at the folk-religion level, whether it is village India, or village Pakistan, or village Europe. Course-work like this could be introduced as a very basic approach to religious equipment; it would include the African concerns, might focus on Africa; you cannot cover the entire field of primal religion all at once. Take up the African focus, but keep it in a wider, systematic framework.

Then, you want to get a bibliography going. Bibliographies have to have a specific purpose and be addressed to a clear audience. The world is full, at the moment, of all sorts of people overlapping with bibliographies; there are few areas where there is more money and time being wasted at the present than in overlapping bibliographies. Yet, I know it to be one of the most obvious things to start with, and a necessary starting point, or I wouldn't be making such a personal investment of my own at the moment. But it occurs to me that the Unification Seminary, because of the basic concerns of the Unification Church, and its concern to relate to all the world religions, might be the place to make a breakthrough in seminary education.

When I taught in American seminaries, I thought the gap there was simply colossal between the inward-looking, domestic conventionality of their professional rat race, one seminary against another to get some smarter program that might sell better, and the world terms on which I saw a number of students eager to work. It strikes me that the Unification Church is operating in world terms, that this is your basic agenda; so maybe your seminary has the chance of making a breakthrough, at least on the seminary scene, that might have wider implications for the things we are talking about here.

Warren Lewis: Know, Harold, that I'll be playing at least this section of the tape at our next faculty meeting in Barrytown!

Kurt Johnson: I want to add something. With the Unification Movement, one has some unique resources not usually available: you've got free labor and a worldwide work force. The great thing about the Movement is that you don't have to pay people to work, and they're all over the world; they're in Africa, they're in New York.

Harold Turner: And, they've got motivation, if I may put it at a somewhat higher level. I believe you've got a motivation, a dynamic, that one doesn't have in every seminary.

Kurt Johnson: Another point, too, is that the Movement can publish cheaply. A combination of efforts between the manpower of our Interfaith project and the Seminary should enable us to undertake something quite substantial.

Warren Lewis: It had occurred to me to offer the good services of my students, who are bucking for an A, in the production of this kind of a bibliography; but since I, too, Harold, have done bibliographical work (on Latin Averroism), and know the pains involved, I hesitated to pop off with an unpremeditated suggestion. But it is clear, a composite bibliography would be the right thing to do. Several of you have told us of all the bibliographical riches; yet, as I listen to each one of you, each one tells me about a deposit different from what the previous speakers told about.

Shall we plan a bibliographical project to draw on the resources available in this room and elsewhere? Unification Seminary can be Grand Central Station for the activity; we'll pay for the paper and the postage; we'll communicate with you and with others, receive your bibliographies, film lists, and so forth; and, following your suggestions, we'll put the thing together. Don't expect us, once again, to do original research; we're not trained for that, but we're pretty good at unifying what other people have already done.

Myrtle Langley: Might I further suggest that those of us who know other people contact those whose specialized job is to do this kind of thing. Take, for example, the office of David Barrett; he would probably have lists of bibliographies there already.

Warren Lewis: Our first stage would be to gather existing bibliographies, unify them into a composite biblography, send each of you a working copy of it, let you amend and annotate it, add whatever has been overlooked, and send back your expanded copy to us; we'll put it together again, and then we'll have it.

Kurt Johnson: Even though the Seminary would take full responsibility for the work, along with help we can throw in, still the product remains the common property of the ongoing conference. This project must be set up with the clear idea of serving the whole; the Unification movement maintains a serving position, and thus legitimates what it wants to be done and the direction it wants things to go.

Warren Lewis: There you have heard in a nutshell from a member of the Unification Church the theory of how the Church functions in the world of religion. It understands itself to be serving everybody else. They're really quite serious about that; so this kind of project fits in with their self-understanding.

We have come to a good spot to stop for a cup of coffee. Let's stand officially adjourned with heartfelt thanks to everyone of you, especially Irving Hexham, who ran the risk of being abrasive enough to invite you here to confer with an unknown quantity. Thank you so much for coming. We will be in touch; and we will continue, as we have begun, in full collegiality. Does anyone else have anything they would like to say?

Stanley Mogoba: Just to say "thank you" to you and to all those who organized the conference, for having invited us. We enjoyed every moment of our being here. As we are aware that there is a lot to be done, we could not expect this conference to do everything; but this and other conferences should be ways of stimulating us to go on.

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