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EDITOR'S PREFACE

This issue of *Landas* offers essays on various topics of interest for our readers: two on Biblical exegesis and theology and one each for pastoral ministry, moral theology, religious education, missiology, and interfaith dialogue.

Miriam R. Alejandrino, O.S.B. ("Heroic Women in Deuteronomistic History") examines the various meanings of *gibbôr* in the Hebrew Bible and uses them as criteria for identifying and describing certain women in the Deuteronomistic History who may be regarded as heroines (*gebîrôt*). The author considers the following as worthy of the title: Rahab (Jos. 2:1–24), Deborah and Jael (Jgs. 4–5), the unnamed woman who killed Abimelech (Jgs. 9:50–55), Hannah (1 Sam. 1:9–20; 2:1–10), Michal (1 Sam. 19:11–17), Abigail (1 Sam. 25:18–31), and Huldah (2 Kgs. 22:14–20). According to her, moreover,

> there are still stories in the Bible about women with heroic qualities despite the strong patriarchal culture of the society from which these sacred texts emerged. These women risked their lives and made sacrifices for the sake of the nation and the well-being of the chosen people of God. The sacred texts give witness, therefore, to the significant role that women play in the fulfillment of the divine plan for humanity. (15)

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J. ("Hosea 3:1–5: Afterwards the Israelites Shall Repent and Seek the Lord Their God") presents an exegetical essay on Hos. 3:1–5 in which he finds three elements that are inextricably linked with one another and which are essential

for communicating the integral message of the prophet: *allegory*, *interpretation*, and *outcome*. Narrated as a first-person account, Hosea's life story is an *allegory* meant to convey a prophetic message to Israel. All his actions have symbolic meanings which are explained in the storytelling process and interpreted in terms of their significance and import for the nation. The *interpretation* comes in the form of a comparison—how God will deal with his people—while the *outcome* spells out what is in store for Israel's future; punishment (v. 4) along with its healing effect (v. 5) are thus foretold. "The divine strategy of loving Israel despite her infidelity and of divesting the nation of its government and cult for many days triumphs and elicits repentance from the people: "afterwards the Israelites will repent and seek the Lord their God" (20).

Leo-Martin Angelo R. Ocampo ("Internet and Social Media: Bridge or Barrier for a Culture of Communion?") discusses how the evolving technology of the Internet and of social media can be either a bridge and/or a barrier for a culture of communion. The author traces the development of the Internet from its primary stage (Web 1.0), which gave users access to information stored on servers, to a second stage (Web 2.0), which interconnected people interactively across social networks like Facebook and Twitter, before continuing on to the present third stage (Web 3.0), in which search engines and applications can predict or anticipate users' interests and thus connect them to websites and people with similar pursuits, and finally to a future fourth stage (Web 4.0), in which there will be an increasing symbiosis between human beings and computers on the cloud. Yet while such advances in cybertechnology have revolutionized communication and enhanced interconnectivity among individuals, the Web has, at the same time, created serious problems such as Internet addiction, social and emotional impairment in growing children, cyberbullying, the proliferation of "fake news," easy access to pornography and gambling, the use of algorithms in targeted advertising, and cyber identity and personal data theft, among others. Ocampo thus compares the ambivalent character of the

Internet to the Biblical image of a two-edged sword that cuts both ways; "the challenge for us," he says, is "to harness the potential of the Internet so it becomes a bridge and not a barrier to a culture of communion" (58).

James McTavish, F.M.V.D. ("A Critique of Gender Ideology") points out the confusion that gender ideology promotes among people, especially with children who are growing up into sexual maturity. The idea that one can choose their gender regardless of their biological sex only exacerbates the problem of young people who are experiencing "gender dysphoria" (distress brought about by an incongruence between biological sex and experienced gender) and gives them free rein to engage in immoral behavior or activities such as homosexual relationships (prone to HIV infection), "sex reassignment surgery" (a form of mutilation that does not really change the sex of a person), having a *laissez-faire* attitude toward sex, etc. McTavish notes: "Gender-confused young people ... need clearer guidance ... to enable them to traverse the choppy ocean of sexual maturation during their adolescent years" (73). Indeed, Pope Francis is also quoted as inculcating Catholic teaching on sexuality:

> valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. (*Laudato Si'*, no. 155)

Johnny C. Go, S.J. ("Catholic Educational Leadership as a Spiritual Practice") argues for new educational leadership in which spirituality plays an essential role. To navigate the rough seas of the contemporary world with all its complexities and hazards, leaders need inner strength and clarity of vision that are nourished by religious faith, a conviction that impels them to fulfill their mission and commitment toward their community. "This attentiveness to the community's purpose and members," the author explains, "enables leaders to transcend themselves in order to carry out the task of leadership" (89–90).

James H. Kroeger, M.M. ("Discovering the Profound Wisdom of Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*") revisits and reexamines Pope St. Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World) in celebration of the latter's canonization on October 14, 2018. Published in the wake of the 1974 International Synod on Evangelization, the exhortation contains profound insights that are the results of both the Synod discussions and the extensive consultations undertaken to prepare for it. The document as such has contributed to a holistic and integral understanding of evangelization, and delineates the theological principles and guidelines which all Christians should follow when evangelizing and giving credible witness to the Gospel. Kroeger notes that Paul VI, who also placed evangelization at the heart of the Church's contemporary mission, "carefully defines, nuances, and balances diverse elements within the evangelization process.... It is his unique genius to have achieved integration and balance on so many topics" (95). As a result, both Pope St. John Paul II (*Redemptoris Missio*) and Pope Francis (*Evangelii Gaudium*) have taken up the challenge of redirecting the Church's mission toward evangelization. Francis's reform agenda, for instance, envisions the creation of a new "super dicastery for evangelization" which is expected to surpass the Congregation of the Faith in terms of importance. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* can thus be called the *magna carta* of the Catholic Church's mission of evangelization, and rightly so.

Jojo M. Fung, S.J. ("The Mystique of Dialogue: Pathway to Spirit Power for Liberative Struggle") describes his experience of being initiated into the mysterious world of shamanism in a Murut village community called Bantul in Sabah, East Malaysia. Here the pathway of acquiring what he calls the "spirit power" of the shaman consists of various stages, with the first step involving a ritual "dipping in the waters of shamanism" which the Muruts call "*na rio*" (taking a bath). The initiate then goes through a period of apprenticeship where the master-shaman trains her/him to invoke, by means of ritual incantations, various spirits favorable for healing the sick, delivering those possessed by demons, bestowing blessings

upon the community, or mediating harmonious relationships between human beings and spirits. During a full moon, the apprentice stays in a hut away from the community; there the master-shaman will introduce her/him to various spirits, among whom one will be her/his spirit-guide. Finally, the apprentice becomes the shaman of the community when the master-shaman dies. Reflecting thus upon his experience of being initiated into the world of shamanism, the author feels called to accompany the indigenous communities of Asia and utilize the soteriological power of their shamanic beliefs and rituals in their quest for social justice and ecological well-being.

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.

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HEROIC WOMEN IN DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

Miriam R. Alejandrino, O.S.B.

"Hero"[1] is the usual translation of the Hebrew word גבור[2] (*gibbôr*) which in the Bible refers to a "young vigorous man apt for all that is virile" or a "strong, valiant man."[3] גבור can thus be used for men who have achieved military or political

[1]For a discussion on the characteristics of a hero according to Hebrew tradition, see R. Porter, "Heroes in the Old Testament: The Hero as Seen in the Book of Judges," in H. R. E. Davidson, ed., *The Hero in Tradition and Folklore* (London: Folklore Society, 1984), 93–96.

[2]For the occurrences of גבור in the Hebrew Bible, see A. Even-Shoshan, *Qonqordanziah Hadashah Letanak*, 2nd ed. (Jerushalaim: Kiryat Sefer, 1992), 252.

[3]See *s.v.* "גבור," in L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, M. Richardson, & J. Stamm, *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 165; F. Brown, S. R. Driver, & C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906/1951), 150. For a more extensive treatment of the meaning of גבור in the Hebrew Bible, see J. Kühlewein, "גבור *gbr* überlegein sein," in E. Jenni & C. Westermann, eds., *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1971), 398–402; H. Kosmala, "גבור," in G. Botterweck & H. Ringgren, eds., *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* Vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973), 902–919; G. Botterweck & H. Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 373–377.

victory for the welfare of the nation.[4] In this article, however, we examine some texts on women in the Deuteronomistic History (DH)[5] to determine whether the qualities that constitute a גבור can also be found in them. Indeed, some women in the DH could well qualify to be "heroines" based on the second part of the description of a גבור, that is, "those who achieved victory for the welfare of the nation."[6]

Swidler[7] qualifies the traditional view that women have a secondary status in ancient Israelite society. He explains that there was a dual tradition on women in the Hebraic nation—one positive and the other negative. The positive view of women was connected with goddess worship and higher status for them; the negative notion was traced to Yahweh worship and dominant status for men. As such, Swidler[8] claims

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[4]W. McKane maintains that "more generally, ***gibbôr ḥayil*** was applied to men of ability who could hold positions of responsibility in the community, and ***ḥayil*** was used with reference to ethical worth" ("The ***gibbôr ḥayil*** in the Israelite Community," *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society* 17 [1957–1958]: 35). For M. Bal, "it is … power more than any individual quality [that] defines the gibbor" (*Death & Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* [Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988], 257 n. 24). In the case of the women discussed in this article, we may say that it is the power of Yahweh working in them that makes them heroines.

[5]Deuteronomistic History (DH) refers to the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings.

[6]Though the conclusion of T. Ilan ("Women's Studies and Jewish Studies—When and Where Do They Meet?" *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 3:2 [1996]: 172) that studies on women "are a yardstick by which to measure a person's prejudices" has a grain of truth in it, it is not always conclusive. If we let the text and its context speak for themselves, the Biblical texts on women in the Deuteronomistic History have something objective to teach readers of all times.

[7]L. Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations of Woman* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 158.

[8]Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations of Woman*, 159. See also S. Terrien, *Till the Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood & Womanhood* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 85–86 and G. Emmerson, "Women in Ancient Israel," in R. Clements, ed., *The*

that an intense restriction on Jewish women began after the return of the Jewish remnant from the Babylonian exile in the 6th century BCE.

Bozak[9] proposes another theory—that the Israelites who lived in Babylonian society during the exile had witnessed how Babylonian women enjoyed greater freedom and legal autonomy. This experience then influenced the status of Israelite women in Israelite society when they returned to their native country after the exile.

There are eight women in the Deuteronomistic History who can qualify as heroines according to the definition of the word discussed above. They are Rahab (Jos. 2:1–24), Deborah and Jael (Jgs. 4–5), the unnamed woman who had put an end to Abimelech's life (Jgs. 9:50–55), Hannah (1 Sam. 1:9–20; 2:1–10), Michal (1 Sam. 19:11–17), Abigail (1 Sam. 25:18–31), and Huldah (2 Kgs. 22:14–20).

Rahab in Jos. 2:1–24

Israel's entry into the promised land was made possible through the collaboration of Rahab, who is described as a prostitute, זונה. She facilitated the initial step of Israel's entrance into Canaan by hiding the two spies whom Joshua sent to reconnoiter the country. Laffey[10] calls her the "heroine of Jericho" and explains that the story of Rahab

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World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 391.

[9]B. Bozak, *Life "Anew": A Literary-Theological Study of Jer. 30–31*, Analecta Biblica 122 (Roma: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1991), 164–170. But I. Ljung (*Silence or Suppression: Attitudes Towards Women in the Old Testament*, Uppsala Women Studies: Women in Religion 2 [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1989], 70–73) traces the emergence of the female's role in Israelite society back to the pre-exilic Israel. The only positive role attributed by Ljung to females, however, was the naming of a child.

[10]A. Laffey, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 85.

"describes how the cooperation of a woman—the very lowest on the totem pole as foreigner and harlot—is crucial to that first success."[11]

Even though she is not an Israelite, Rahab confesses nevertheless that Israel's God is the God of heaven above and here on earth (v. 11). Her discourse in v. 9 can be considered prophetic,[12] for she proclaims Yahweh's plans for Israel: "I know that the Lord has given you this land." The narrator clearly gives the woman a prominent role, lowly in status as she may be, in risking her life in an act of heroism so that the Israelites could conquer the land.

Deborah and Jael in Judges 4

In the Book of Judges, only Deborah receives the double function of prophetess[13] and judge[14]—she is introduced in v. 4 as a woman (אִשָּׁה), the wife of Lappidoth (אֵשֶׁת לַפִּידוֹת), and as a prophetess (נְבִיאָה) who was judging Israel (שֹׁפְטָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל). For Kaswalder,[15] Deborah is a

[11]Laffey, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 89.

[12]Laffey comments that "her harlotry did not in any way prevent her from assuming an almost prophetic stance" (*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 86).

[13]F. van Dijk-Hemmes ("Traces of Women's Texts in the Hebrew Bible," in F. van Dijk-Hemmes & A. Brenner, *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible* [Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1993], 43) claims that Deborah is portrayed in the narrative as the model of a true prophet as sketched in Deut. 18:18–20.

[14]For an evaluation of the different interpretations of Deborah as judge, from Alt to Seeligmann, see T. Ishida, "The Leaders of the Tribal Leagues 'Israel' in the Pre-Monarchic Period," *Revue Biblique* 80:4 (1973): 514–519.

[15]P. Kaswalder, "I Giudici di Israel," *Liber Annuus* 41 (1991): 35. See also A. Malamat, "Charismatic Leadership in the Book of Judges," in F. Cross, W. Lemke, & P. Miller, eds., *Magnalia Dei=The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 152–168 and A. van der Kooij, "On Male and Female Views in Judges 4 and 5," in B. Becking & M. Dijkstra, eds., *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific*

judge, prophet, and charismatic leader in line with Moses, Joshua, and Samuel. All the four nouns used to describe her—woman, prophetess, wife, and judge—have a relational nuance: as a wife, Deborah is related to her husband and family; as a prophetess and judge, she is bound to relate to society.

Bal translates "wife of Lappidoth" into "woman of torches" and explains[16] that "'woman of torches' fits her character too well … 'of torches' is the essence of Deborah: an inflamed and inflaming woman whose prophecy is crucial for the story." For Bal, Lappidoth was not Deborah's husband on the ground; indeed, nowhere in the Bible do we find the name.[17]

Yahweh's special election of Deborah allows her to give moral support to the Israelites in their time of crisis. Block[18] considers her as the "alter ego of Yahweh [whose] presence alone was enough to guarantee victory over the enemy" while Klein[19] maintains that "the presentation of Deborah is altogether enigmatic: as deliverer, she catalyzes others to acts of delivery." O'Connell,[20] on the other hand, sees her role in the story as simply that of a "catalyst of action in the plot."

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and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, Biblical Interpretation Series 18 (Leiden/Köln: Brill, 1996), 141, n. 11.

[16]Bal, *Death & Dissymmetry*, 208.

[17]Against this interpretation, see B. Lindars, *Judges 1–5: A New Translation and Commentary*, ed. A. Mayes (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 182. In the context of the narrative, "wife of" favors well Lindars's interpretation of taking Lappidoth as a personal name.

[18]D. Block, "Deborah Among the Judges: The Perspective of the Hebrew Historian," in A. Millard, J. Hoffmeier, & D. Baker, eds., *Faith, Tradition, and History* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 249.

[19]L. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 42.

[20]R. O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, Vetus Testamentum Supplementum 63 (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1996), 107.

Nevertheless, and despite the fact that she appears only in the first half of the story (4:4–14), Deborah plays a crucial role. Her leadership as a judge during the time of oppression was the germ of the forthcoming victory and liberation from the Canaanites.

The narrator mentions twice (4:17, 19) that Jael was the wife of Heber the Kenite.[21] Jael speaks only on two occasions—once to Sisera (4:18) and once to Barak (4:22b), both of whom she invites to enter her tent.

While some authors[22] see sexual implication in Jael's invitation for Sisera to enter her tent, it is totally absurd to claim that something sexual happened between the two while they were inside. Common sense dictates that such an intention could not have occurred to Sisera whose present concern then was to save his life by finding a safe hiding place.[23] Matthews,[24] however, has shown convincingly that although Jael violated the hospitality code by offering hospitality to Sisera (4:18a), the latter is more culpable for accepting Jael's invitation of hospitality (4:18b), requesting water from Jael (4:19b), and commanding Jael to stand at the door of her tent (4:20). These violations of the hospitality code in the Ancient Near East by Sisera justify the violent act of Jael.

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[21]On the different interpretations of Jael's name, see C. Meyers, "Jael," in P. Achtemeier, ed., *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 445; E. van Wolde, "Ya'el in Judges 4," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 107:2 (1995): 240–246; S. Layton, "Ya'el in Judges 4: An Onomastic Rejoinder," *ZAW* 109:1 (1997): 93–94; and N. M. Sarna, "Jael," in *Encyclopedia Judaica* Vol. 9 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), cols. 1247–1248.

[22]E.g., Y. Zakovitch, "Siseras Tod," *ZAW* 93 (1981): 364–370; S. Niditch, "Eroticism and Death in the Tale of Jael," in P. L. Day, ed., *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1989), 50.

[23]See also B. Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 83.

[24]V. Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 21:1 (1991): 15–20.

Yee,[25] moreover, defends Jael's alleged violations of hospitality as morally justifiable in the context of guerilla tactics; according to her, Jael's assassination of the Canaanites' army-commander qualifies her as a warrior, broadly speaking. In fact, Yee compares Jael's trickery to the guerilla tactics that the Israelite forces employ.

Jael's invitation to Barak, on the other hand, gives the reader an impression that she had just accomplished an heroic act. For Chalcraft,[26] "it is precisely in her deviance that Jael qualifies not only as a member of the narrator's social group, but as an heroic member of that social group. Jael is praised for breaking social conventions on behalf of Israel."

Bos,[27] meanwhile, describes Jael as one who "exercises physical and emotional strength" but is "weak by virtue of her womanhood." Jael indeed displays physical and emotional strength, but I do not agree with Bos's statement that womanhood implies weakness.[28] By killing the chief of the enemy, Jael became a military hero rather than a victim of war.

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[25]G. Yee, "By the Hand of a Woman: The Metaphor of the Woman-Warrior in Judges 4," *Semeia* 61 (1993): 99–132.

[26]D. Chalcraft, "Deviance and Legitimate Action in the Book of Judges," in D. Clines, S. Fowl, & S. Porter, eds., *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 87 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 182–183.

[27]J. Bos, "Out of the Shadows: Genesis 38; Judges 4:17–22; Ruth 3," *Semeia* 42 (1988): 58.

[28]F. Buytendijk (*Die Frau* [Köln, 1953]) has tried to demonstrate that women are biologically and psychologically stronger than men; see also C. Jung (*The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* Vol. 10: *Civilization in Transition* [1964], 284–292), who illustrates this through his case studies. E. Good also expresses another opinion against Bos's interpretation ("Deception and Women: A Response," *Semeia* 42 [1988]: 117–132).

Deborah and Jael in Judges 5

While she is referred to as judge, prophetess, and wife of Lappidoth in the narrative, Deborah is simply called the "mother in Israel" (5:7b אם בישראל) in the song, she who awakened the inactive villagers. According to De Boer,[29] Deborah earned this title through her good and effective counsel of faithfulness and unity in Israel. Camp[30] claims that Deborah is a "symbol of the unity that bound Israel together under one God Yahweh"; Lindars[31] explains that Deborah is mother of Israel because her act "preserves the population of the nation." Indeed, the title "mother" summarizes all the other titles given to Deborah in the narrative.

Mothers in the Old Testament play very important roles in Israelite society.[32] While they have no direct participation in the political realm,[33]

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[29]P. de Boer, "The Counsellor," in M. Noth & D. Thomas, eds., *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, VTS 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 59; P. de Boer, *Fatherhood and Motherhood in Israelite and Judean Piety* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 126.

[30]C. Camp, "The Wise Women of 2 Samuel: A Role Model for Women in Early Israel?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43:1 (1981): 28.

[31]B. Lindars, "Deborah's Song: Women in the Old Testament," *BJRL* 65:2 (1983): 168. See also Bal, *Death & Dissymmetry*, 210; J. Exum, "'Mother in Israel': A Familiar Figure Reconsidered," in L. M. Russell, ed., *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 73–85; van der Kooij, "On Male and Female Views in Judges 4 and 5," 144; and H.-D. Neef, "Der Sieg Deboras und Baraks über Sisera: Exegetische Beobachtungen zum Aufbau und Werden von Jdc 4, 1–24," *ZAW* 101:1 (1989): 46.

[32]On the positive role of women in Old Testament society, see, among others, L. Jacobs, "Woman," in *Encyclopedia Judaica* Vol. 16, 623–630; J. Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed: The Status of Woman in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 66–193; C. Meyers, "Procreation, Production, and Protection: Male-Female Balance in Early Israel," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 51:4 (1983): 571–578; and A. Maillot, *Eve, ma mère: Étude sur la femme dans l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1989), 17–22.

[33]G. Yee ("By the Hand of a Woman: The Metaphor of the Woman-Warrior in Judges 4," 109–114) argues, however, that "women like Deborah in pre-state

their influence is strongly felt in the family circle for it is their duty to educate and raise the children.[34] Contrary to claims that women in Israelite society are merely silent citizens, Deborah is an active member who inspires, initiates, and transforms the attitudes of her fellow citizens both in the song and in the narrative. Her leadership is underlined in 5:15a in particular, where she is portrayed as working not only with Barak but with the princes of Issachar as well.

Jael is mentioned twice in the song: in v. 6, which informs us of the time and situation, and in v. 24, where she is praised as the most blessed among women in the tent—תְּבֹרַךְ מִנָּשִׁים יָעֵל אֵשֶׁת חֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי מִנָּשִׁים בָּאֹהֶל תְּבֹרָךְ. The repeated praise of Jael in 5:24 underlines her prominence over other women; for Scippa,[35] Jael is blest above all women because of her obedience and docility as an instrument of God.

The reason for the praise of Jael is given in v. 26: she had the courage to kill the enemy of the Israelites, thereby ushering in freedom for the nation. Jael thus stands out and is acclaimed as the most blessed above all women of her time. Her circle of influence goes beyond her

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Israel had opportunities to take up leadership in war precisely because military organization was essentially domestic in character."

[34]See Camp, "The Wise Women of 2 Samuel: A Role Model for Women in Early Israel?," 14–29; J. Hackett, "Women's Studies and the Hebrew Bible," in R. Friedman & H. Williamson, eds., *The Future of Biblical Studies: The Hebrew Scriptures*, SBL Semeia Studies (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), 150–153; J. Crenshaw, "A Mother's Instruction to Her Son (Proverbs 31:1–9)," in J. Crenshaw, ed., *Perspectives on the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of Walter J. Harrelson* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 9–22; C. Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); and C. Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 216 (Berlin/New York: W. de Gruyter, 1993).

[35]V. Scippa, "Giaele, una donna forte dell'Antico Testamento: analisi strutturale di Gdc 5, 23–27 e 4, 17–23," *Rivista Biblica* 39:4 (1991): 399.

family,[36] and Niditch[37] considers her as "the center and heroine of the story."

An Unnamed Woman in Jgs. 9:50–55

The unnamed woman in this pericope, who had the courage to throw a millstone on the rebel king Abimelech, delivered the Israelites from the evil he was about to inflict on them (vv. 50–52). Her deed remembered more than her name, she can be considered a forgotten heroine, yet what she did to Abimelech can be compared to what Jael did to Sisera, whose death put an end to Canaanite rule and ushered in peace for the land.

Hannah in 1 Sam. 1:9–20; 2:1–10

The history of kingship in Israel opens with the story of the humiliations which the barren and aged woman Hannah had to suffer, yet whose afflictions and prayers were rewarded with a son. She could be considered a model of private prayer, yet her role and influence cannot be confined only to such—Yahweh's answer to Hannah's prayer benefits not only her and her family but the whole nation as well.

Callaway[38] maintains that Hannah as a barren woman symbolizes the afflicted and hated people of Israel whom Yahweh visits. Her son

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[36]See J. Hackett, "In the Days of Jael: Reclaiming the History of Women in Ancient Israel," in C. Atkinson, C. Buchanan, & M. Miles, eds., *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 15–38.

[37]S. Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*: *A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 116.

[38]M. Callaway, *Sing, O Barren One: A Study in Comparative Midrash* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 137. See also J. Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives*, JSOTS 163 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 43–60.

Samuel, moreover, anointed the first king of Israel at a moment in the nation's history when the people perceived kingship as the best solution to their problem of leadership.

Michal in 1 Sam. 19:11–17

Michal is usually remembered in history for her deceit and lies. She betrayed her father Saul to save her husband David (vv. 12–17) by helping him escape through a window (v. 12).[39] When Saul's messengers came for David the following morning, Michal lied and said that David was sick. This was reported to Saul, who then ordered that the bedridden David be brought to him so that he might kill him (vv. 13–15). It was then that the messengers discovered the dummy that Michal had made. When Saul asked Michal why she had deceived him, she replied with another lie and led her father to believe that it was the only way to save her own life.

Deceit and lies characterize the actions and words of Michal.[40] Yet had Michal not taken the initiative and persuaded David to flee, Saul's messengers might have captured him and Saul would have killed David. David's—and Israel's—history might thus have been very different had Michal not intervened. The text portrays her as a faithful wife who used prudence, courage, and even cunning to save David from Saul's anger.

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[39]J. Exum writes that "by letting David out the window … Michal figuratively births David into freedom" (*Tragedy and Biblical Narrative: Arrows of the Almighty* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 89).

[40]A. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983), 25; A. Berlin ("Characterization in Biblical Narrative: David's Wives," in D. Clines & T. Eskenazi, eds., *Telling Queen Michal's Story: An Experiment in Comparative Interpretation*, JSOTS 119 [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991], 92–93) notes that "Michal has been cast in a most unfeminine role." Against this opinion of Berlin that Michal is portrayed as unfeminine, see Exum, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative*, 72.

Exum[41] argues that the female voice, particularly the stories of Jephtha's daughter and Michal, cannot be silenced, even by "literary murder." Here is another example of a woman who saved a man's life. Yet she is also a heroine indeed, for her act had repercussions for national advantage—King David bringing peace and prosperity to Israel.

Abigail in 1 Sam. 25:18–31

The narrator describes Abigail, the wife of Nabal,[42] as beautiful and intelligent; according to Berlin,[43] "Abigail epitomizes the אשת חיל 'worthy woman.'" Her description contrasts with that of her husband Nabal who is said to be a mean and bad-tempered man,[44] and whose refusal of David's request for provisions (vv. 6–11) infuriated the latter, making him set out with his men to kill Nabal and his troops (v. 22). The imminent danger to Nabal's life, however, was averted through Abigail's intervention. Informed by her servants, she went out to meet David along the way, offered him and his men provisions which she herself had prepared (v. 18), and pleaded with David not to take vengeance on her husband (v. 23–27). David's anger was thus abated. Indeed, Abigail's initiative to appease David even without consulting her husband and yet returning to him afterwards portrays her as a strong and determined woman who acts promptly to avoid bloodshed and save her family.

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[41]J. Exum, "Murder They Wrote: Ideology and the Manipulation of Female Presence in Biblical Narrative," in Clines & Eskenazi, *Telling Queen Michal's Story*, 176–198.

[42]For a characterization of Nabal, see J. Levenson, "1 Samuel 25 as Literature and as History," *CBQ* 40:1 (1978): 13–17.

[43]Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 31. See also P. McCarter Jr., *1 Samuel*, Anchor Bible 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 40 and S. Schroer, "Abigail: eine kluge Frau für den Frieden," in K. Walter, hrsg., *Zwischen Ohnmacht und Befreiung: Biblische Frauengestalten* (Freiburg: Herder, 1988), 96.

[44]Berlin describes Nabal as "the proverbial fool" (*Poetics and Interpretation*, 31).

Levenson[45] describes Abigail as a "woman of providence … endowed with the highly valued initiative and efficiency of the *'ešeṯ ḥayil* (ideal woman)" and comparable to the woman in Prov. 31:10–31. Laffey notes, however, that the traditional interpretation has overlooked the character of Abigail and focuses more on the promise made to David through her, that the Lord will make him a king over Israel and victorious over his enemies (vv. 28–30). Both interpretations, though, are complementary rather than contradictory, for Abigail's words anticipated Yahweh's message for David through Nathan in 2 Sam. 7:4–16.[46]

The courage of both Michal and Abigail in protecting and supporting David saved his life and thus gave Israel a king who united its people and led them to prosperity.

Huldah in 2 Kgs. 22:14–20

Huldah[47] is the only prophetess[48] mentioned in the DH during the period of the monarchy. When King Josiah ordered Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Ashiah to inquire from the Lord about the book of the law found in the temple (vv. 11–13), they went to consult Huldah the prophetess (v. 14) who told them God's ultimate

[45]Levenson, "1 Samuel 25 as Literature and as History," 20.

[46]Laffey gives Abigail the title "prophetess" by inference. She writes, "Her words are the vehicle of God's promise for David's future.… Though the text does not give her the title prophetess, her words virtually portray her as such" (*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 110).

[47]On the meaning of the name "Huldah" as "weasel," see T. S. Frymer, "Huldah," *Encyclopedia Judaica* Vol. 8, 1063. On a treatment of Huldah in the Haggadah, see A. Rothkoff, "Huldah," *Encyclopedia Judaica* Vol. 8, 1063.

[48]For a comparative study of rabbinic and Christian interpretations of the prophetess Huldah, see C. Colafemmina, "Le profetesse Debora e Hulda nell'esegesi giudaica e Cristiana," in *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi. Atti del 1° Seminario di ricerca su "Storia dell'Esegesi giudaica e Cristiana antica," Ottobre 27–29 1983* (Bologna, 1984), 223–229.

judgment upon the nation (vv. 15–17). Glatt-Gilad, however, claims that "from a literary-thematic point of view, Huldah's prophecy, which appears between the two faces of the reform in Chronicles, serves as a corrective reinforcement, rather than as a fatalistic foreboding as in Kings."[49]

Huldah, who speaks and acts to accomplish God's will, is described in the Targum as a teacher in the house of instruction.[50] We may thus ask how and why the story of this prophetess was preserved in the patriarchal culture[51] from which the sacred text emerged. We could infer from this the important role Huldah played in such a crucial moment of the history of the monarchy.[52]

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[49]D. Glatt-Gilad, "The Role of Huldah's Prophecy in the Chronicler's Portrayal of Josiah's Reform," *Biblica* 77:1 (1996): 30. See also Laffey, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 142.

[50]See D. Harrington & A. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, The Aramaic Bible 10 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987), 309.

[51]Laffey (*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 85–143) attributes the negative portrayal of women in the Bible to the patriarchal mentality in ancient Israel. See also P. Bird, "Images of Women in the Old Testament," in R. Ruether, ed., *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 41–88; R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 45–50; E. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 23–27; and E. Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 13.

[52]D. Christensen ("Huldah and the Men of Anathoth: Women in Leadership in the Deuteronomic History," *SBL Seminar Papers* 23 [1984]: 399–404) takes the mention of Deborah in Judges 4 and of Huldah in 2 Kgs. 22, together with Queen Jezebel (1 Kgs. 16:31–2 Kgs. 9:37) and Queen Athaliah (2 Kgs. 11), as illustrations of the theme that is so important in the Deuteronomistic history—the conflict and tension between prophet and king.

Summary

Women in the Deuteronomistic History have played significant roles which could qualify them to be called "heroines." Just as the story of the Israelites' entrance into the promised land begins with a woman collaborating with the spies of Joshua, so the story of the monarchy opens with a trusting and faithful woman who, though beyond her fertile years, cooperates with Yahweh's designs. The story of the monarchy also concludes with the collaboration of a woman, one designated as a prophetess, with King Josiah.

The women who accomplished such heroic deeds—Rahab, Deborah, Jael, an unnamed woman, Hannah, Michal, Abigail, and Huldah—are of diverse social status and characters. Rahab's low social standing as a harlot of Jericho was no hindrance for her to do good for the welfare of God's chosen people. Her heroic act of risking her life for their sake has been written down and will forever be remembered in history.[53]

The unnamed woman who killed the wicked king Abimelech with a millstone thrown from the tower saved the nation from an evil ruler. Hannah's prayer ushered in the monarchy which united the nation for some time. Michal's and Abigail's courage and initiative exemplify women who are faithful and mindful of the well-being of their family. Huldah delivered the message of Yahweh at a time when neither the good king Josiah nor his advisers could know it.

Indeed, there are still stories in the Bible about women with heroic qualities despite the strong patriarchal culture of the society from which these sacred texts emerged. These women risked their lives and made sacrifices for the sake of the nation and the well-being of the chosen people of God. The sacred texts give witness, therefore, to the significant role that women play in the fulfillment of the divine plan for humanity.

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[53]Laffey maintains that "the stories of these women are her-story and bear retelling" (*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 142).

Landas 32:2 (2018) 17–32

HOSEA 3:1–5

Afterwards the Israelites Shall Repent and Seek the Lord Their God

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.

[1]The Lord said, "Go again, love a woman
who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress;
even as the Lord loves the people of Israel,
though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes."
[2]So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver
and a homer and a lethech of barley.
[3]I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days;
you shall not play the harlot, or belong to another man;
so will I also be with you."
[4]For the Israelites shall dwell many days
without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar,
without ephod or teraphim.
[5]Afterwards the Israelites shall repent
and seek the Lord their God, [and David their king;]
and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his
goodness [in the latter days]. – Hosea 3:1–5

Many of the early commentators consider the entirety of Hos. 3:1–5 as a later insertion on the supposition that the absence of kings, princes, sacrifices, etc. already reflects the situation after the fall of the northern kingdom in 722/721 BC. The expression "for many days" (ימים רבים), in particular, is thought to indicate an enduring climate of devastation, and these commentators

argue that the words "pillar" (מצבה), "ephod" (אפוד), and "teraphim" (תרפים) are not part of Hosea's vocabulary.[1]

But could Hosea not have foreseen a catastrophe that would last for a long time? Moreover, how could the lack of sacrifice and ritual paraphernalia be a reflection of the situation in Israel after 721 BC when the Israelite cult, in fact, continued to thrive there under Assyrian rule?[2] Finally, while מצבה, אפוד, and תרפים appear only here within the book of Hosea, such words could hardly be out of place in the overall preaching of the prophet who was deeply concerned about the cultic life of his people.

A more acceptable opinion is that only the references to "David their king" (דוד מלכם) in v. 5b and the phrase "in the latter days" (הימים באחרית) in v. 5c are later additions.[3] "David their king" may have been

[1]K. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, Kurzer Handkommentar 13 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1904), 9; E. Day, "Is the Book of Hosea Exilic?" *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 26:2 (1909–1910): 113; P. Haupt, "Hosea's Erring Spouse," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 34 (1915): 42; L. Batten, "Hosea's Message and Marriage," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 48 (1929): 270–272; R. Wolfe, "The Editing of the Book of the Twelve," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 53:1 (1935): 93. G. Yee (*Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea*: *A Redaction Critical Investigation*, SBL Diss. 102 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], 57–59) recently revived the suggestion.

[2]According to J. Miller and J. Hayes, "it should not be assumed that either Yahwism, the priesthood, or cult places for worship of Yahweh disappeared from the north" (*A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986], 339; see also J. Hayes & J. Miller, eds., *Israelite and Judaean History* [London: SCM Press, 1977], 434).

[3]E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch*, KAT 12/1, 1st ed. (Leipzig: Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung Dr. Werner Scholl, 1922), 49; A. Weiser, *Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten* I, ATD 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), 23; H. Wolff, *Hosea,* Hermeneia, trans. G. Stansell (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 57; J. Mays, *Hosea,* OTL (London: SCM Press, 1969), 16; P. Borbone, "Il capitolo terzo di Osea," *Henoch* 2 (1980): 258–259. On the other hand, W. Nowack (*Die kleinen Propheten,* 2nd ed., HKAT III/4 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903], 28), T. Robinson ("Hosea," *Die zwölf kleinen Propheten,* HAT 14, hrsg. T. Robinson & F. Horst [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck,

one of the pro-Judah glosses inserted by a later redactor (cf. 1:7, 11; 4:15; 12:1); the ideas expressed in them, moreover, are more in keeping with the thought of later Judaic messianism than with that of an eighth century prophet who has largely ignored the southern kingdom.[4] מלכם דוד appears elsewhere only in Jer. 30:9 and באחרית הימים in Jer. 23:30; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezk. 38:16; and in the expressly eschatological passages of Isa. 2:2 || Mic. 4:1; Gen. 49; and Num. 24:14. From a grammatical point of view, moreover, these words are disjointed with the rest of the passage—David can hardly be appropriate as the second object of "seek" (בקשׁ). This verb, with God as the goal of the search, has a religious—even cultic—sense. Finally, the adverb "afterwards" (אחר) at the beginning of the sentence makes the other time-reference "in the latter days" (באחרית הימים) redundant, and the original stress count (3:3:3) is also disturbed by the insertion (3:5:5).

Structure and Genre. Hos. 3:1–5 contains three elements that are inextricably linked with one another: allegory, interpretation, and outcome.

1964], 16), W. Harper (*Amos and Hosea,* ICC [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1904], 215), and I. Willi-Plein (*Vorformen der Schriftexegese innerhalb des Alten Testaments,* BZAW 123 [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971], 126) regard the whole of v. 5 as secondary. M. Buss (*The Prophetic Word of Hosea: A Morphological Study,* BZAW 111 [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969], 10 and 70) includes v. 4 as a late addition. H. Simian-Yofre thinks that although it is tempting to see a later hand in vv. 4–5, it is possible that these verses may have come from the prophet himself, who rereads the events of his life in the light of other contemporaneous or later occurrences (*El desierto de los dioses: Teología e historia en el libro de Oseas* [Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1993], 60).

[4]For a contrary opinion, see the article of A. van Selms, "The Southern Kingdom in Hosea" (*Studies on the Books of Hosea and Amos,* OTWSA 7 [Potchefstroom, South Africa: Pro Rege-Pers Beperk, 1964], 100–111), which argues that "Hosea knew and honoured a messianic hope connected with the house of David" (110–111). Hos. 3:5 for van Selms thus belongs to the authentic words of the prophet.

Allegory	v. 1a
Interpretation	v. 1b
Allegory	vv. 2–3
Interpretation	v. 4
Outcome	v. 5

These three components are essential for communicating the integral message of the prophet. Hosea's personal life story, narrated as a first-person account (note the *wayyiqtol* form of the main verbs in the narrative parts [vv. 1a.2–3]),[5] is an *allegory* that is meant to convey a prophetic message to Israel. All his actions have symbolic meanings which are explained in the process of telling the story and interpreted in terms of their significance and import for Israel. The *interpretation* in turn comes in the form of a comparison (v. 1b כ "even as …") or explanation (v. 4 כי "for …") of how God would deal with his people. The *outcome* spells out what is in store for Israel's future: punishment (v. 4) along with its healing effect (v. 5) are thus foretold. The divine strategy of loving Israel despite her infidelity and of divesting the nation of its government and cult for many days triumphs and elicits repentance from the people: "afterwards the Israelites will repent and seek the Lord their God.…"

There is thus a thematic unity in Hos. 3:1–5 even though the alternation of allegory and interpretation creates abrupt shifts in the optics of the text: Hosea and the woman in the allegory, God and Israel in the interpretation. The two levels of meaning are not to be

[5]On the question of the historicity of this account and its relationship to the story in Chapter 1, see R. Gordis, "Hosea's Marriage and Message: A New Approach," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 25 (1954): 9–35, esp. 24–35; reprinted in R. Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages* (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1971), 230–254. G. Tucker considers Hos. 3 to be a prophetic proclamation and not an autobiography ("Hosea," in J. Mays, ed., *HarperCollins Bible Commentary* [New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1988], 638).

taken as two separate stages of literary development[6]—apart from v. 1a where God is quoted to show that the prophetic activity emanates from a divine mandate, the whole chapter is a prophetic speech. Indeed, how else could Hosea's life story be a *prophecy* if it has no message and relevance for his contemporaries? There is no reason to consider the interpretations as the work of a later redactor.[7]

Allegory

ויאמר יהוה אלי עוד לך אהב־אשה	[1a]*The Lord said, "Go again, love a woman*
אהבת רע ומנאפת	*who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress;*

Interpretation

כאהבת יהוה את־בני ישׂראל	[1b]*even as the Lord loves the people of Israel,*
והם פנים אל־אלהים אחרים	*though they turn to other gods*
ואהבי אשישי ענבים׃	*and love raisin cakes."*

In Hos. 3:1, we are told, God commanded the prophet to love a promiscuous woman once again, one who is "beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress" (v. 1a); whether or not the woman here is Gomer is debated by scholars.[8] The Septuagint, however, has "a woman who

[6]Simian-Yofre treats vv. 4–5 "separadamente de los vv. 1–3, porque presentan un proceso similar al que hemos constatado en 1:2–9 y 2:4–15. A los hechos presumiblemente biográficos de Oseas se ha sumado una interpretación histórico en forma fundamentos (kî, porque)" (*El desierto*, 60). The particle כי occurs eleven times in cc. 1–2, with five of these introducing a historical interpretation (1:2, 4, 6, 9; 2:2). Yet verses 1:2, 4, 6, and 9 are not treated separately from their context; only 3:4–5 gets special treatment from Simian-Yofre. Why? Simian-Yofre gives no explanation but offers another reason: 3:4–5 contains terms that are mentioned for the first time. It seems, however, that only the words "David their king" and "in the latter days" could not have possibly come from Hosea.

[7]E. Haag dates what he regards as editorial layers in 3:1b, 4, and 5a to the time of Josiah's reform ("Die Ehe des Propheten Hosea," *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 108:1 [1999]: 1–20).

[8]L. Dorn, "Is Gomer the Woman in Hosea 3?" *The Bible Translator* 51:4 (2000): 424–430; A. Scherer, "'Gehe wiederum hin!'—Zum Verhältnis von Hos. 3 zu Hos. 1," *Biblische Notizen* 95 (1998): 23–29; B. Kelle, "Hosea 1–3 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship," *Currents in Biblical Research* 7:2 (2009): 179–216, esp. pp. 187–193; M.-T. Wacker, *Figurations of the Female in the Hosea Book*, HBS 8 (Freiburg: Herder, 1996), 110–114; R. Vielhauer, *The Becoming of the Book Hosea:*

loves evil" or "a woman loving evil" (γυναῖκα ἀγαπῶσαν πονηρα) in place of "a woman beloved of a paramour";[9] the Greek translators as such may have read the Hebrew consonantal text using vowels different from those employed by the Masoretes: *'oheḇeṯ ra'* instead of *'ăhuḇaṯ rēa'*. Nevertheless, the Masoretic reading, which is more consonant with the description of the woman as an adulteress (מנאפת), is preferable.

The meaning of the prophet's action is explained at once by comparing it with God's love for his people Israel "though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes" (v. 1b). Indeed, God was faithful to them despite their many infidelities—in pre-exilic times, the Israelites worshipped many other gods besides their patron God YHWH, and among these were the local Canaanite (*ba'alîm*) and foreign (*'ĕlohê nēḵār*) deities. The delectable "raisin cakes" (אשישי ענבים) were probably offered to the gods as sacrificial gifts.[10] The initial impetus towards strict monotheism thus developed as a result of both the preaching of the eighth century prophets, especially Hosea, and the reforms undertaken by kings Hezekiah and Josiah.

A Redaktionsgeschichte Investigation, BZAW 349 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 130–131.

[9]P. Borbone, who favors the LXX reading "who loves evil," does not offer a convincing argument for his choice. Moreover, his claim that the MT meant to equate *rēa'* with the husband (i.e., Hosea) as attested to by Aquila, Symmachus, and the medieval commentators Rashi and Qimhi is gratuitous ("Il terzo incomodo: L'interpretazione del testo masoretico di Osea 3:1," *Henoch* 7 [1985]: 151–160).

[10]2 Sam. 6:19 (= 1 Chr. 16:3) informs us that David distributed to every person "a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins" when he brought the ark to Jerusalem. That such cakes were delicious can be deduced from a statement in Songs 2:5: "Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples; for I am faint with love." See G. Driver, "Hebrew Notes on 'Song of Songs' and 'Lamentations,'" in W. Baumgartner, O. Eissfeldt, K. Elliger, & L. Rost, eds., *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950), 144.

Allegory

ואכרה לי בחמשה עשר כסף וחמר שערים ולתך שערים:	[2]*So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley.*
ואמר אליה ימים רבים תשבי לי לא תזני ולא תהיי לאיש וגם־אני אליך:	[3]*I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days; you shall not play the harlot, or belong to another man; so will I also be with you."*

Interpretation

כי ימים רבים ישבו בני ישראל אין מלך ואין שר ואין זבח ואין מצבה ואין אפוד ותרפים:	[4]*For the Israelites shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim.*

Hosea acquired the woman for fifteen pieces of silver plus a homer and a lethech of barley (v. 2). He apparently did not have enough silver and so he had to pay in kind to acquire or redeem her. The word "lethech" (לתך) is *hapax legomenon* and so its meaning is obscure, although according to the Mishnah it means half a homer.[11] The Septuagint has "a flask of wine" (νεβελ οἴνου) in its place, a reading which is not attested to in any Hebrew manuscript. The payment could be either a dowry or a price of redemption from being the legal property of another man or from service as a cult prostitute.

After acquiring the woman, the prophet forced her to live a life of sexual abstinence for many days (v. 3). Restraint from both legitimate and illegitimate contact is what is meant by the verse "so will I also be with you" (וגם־אני אליך), which parallels the prohibition in "you shall not play the harlot, or belong to another man" (תזני ולא תהיי לאיש לא)—note the reiterative particle גם. The negative particle לא in v. 3b, which serves as a double duty particle, is implied in v. 3c—not only was she banned from having sexual relations with other men, but Hosea himself will also not consummate the marriage with her. Nevertheless, while the deprivation is meant to wean her from promiscuity, the punitive measure is also educative—"For many days" indicates that the punishment is not forever.

Once again, the meaning of Hosea's action is explained in terms of God's chastisement of Israel in denying the people of their government

[11]M. Powell & D. Potts, "Weights and Measures," in D. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. VI (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 904.

and cult: "For the Israelites shall dwell (ישבו) many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim" (v. 4). Here "king or prince" is a metonym for the monarchy.

> Hosea subjects the institution of the monarchy as such to a fundamental political and theological criticism. This is certainly connected with the wretched picture which the northern kingdom presented to its time: becoming totally unstable as a state, in its last twenty-five years the northern kingdom had six regents, four of whom ascended the throne as usurpers.[12]

The "sacrifice or pillar" or "teraphim or ephod" represents the state of the Israelite cult,[13] which has developed into what scholars describe as a "baalized" worship: "Indeed, from reading Hosea we get the impression that in his time many had accommodated themselves to these [Canaanite] practices to the extent that they no longer made a sharp distinction between worshiping the Canaanite Baal and worshiping YHWH (see Hos. 2:18–19)."[14] Moreover, "apart from individual abuses it is above all the externalized unreflecting and mechanical relationship with God that he singles out: he attacks an inflation of cultic practices … which [are] not accompanied by

[12]R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* Vol. 1, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1994), 170.

[13]For Hosea, these cultic items are metonyms for the Israelite religion. Y. Sherwood correctly observes: "Rather than presenting the reader with a list of items that are distinctively Canaanite … Hos 3:4 confronts the reader with a list of items that are by no means foreign to the texts and history of Israel" (*The Prostitute and the Prophet,* JSOT Sup. Ser. 212 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 129). Just like the ephod and the teraphim, the "pillar" or "standing stone" (מצבה) belongs to the cultic paraphernalia of early Yahwistic shrines (A. Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible,* Anchor Bible Reference Library [New York: Doubleday, 1990], 497, 500) although it is unorthodox from the standpoint of the Bible (G. Barrois, "Pillar," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 3 [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962], 815–816).

[14]J. Miller, *Meet the Prophets* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), 82; J. Krispenz, "Idolatry, Apostasy, Prostitution: Hosea's Struggle Against the Cult," in L.-S. Tiemeyer, ed., *Priests & Cults in the Book of the Twelve* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016), 9–29.

an acceptance of YHWH's instructions (*tôrāh*)."[15] The "ephod" may also symbolize oracular divination practiced by the priests.[16] Thus, "whether political, military, or cultic, every possible substitute for their dependence on YHWH will be stripped away."[17] The people of Israel will then turn back as a result of the deprivation, seek the Lord their God, and come in awe to the Lord's goodness (v. 5).

Outcome

אחר ישבו בני ישׂראל	[5] *Afterwards the Israelites shall repent*
ובקשׁו את־יהוה אלהיהם ואת דוד מלכם	*and seek the Lord their God, [and David their king];*
ופחדו אל־יהוה ואל־טובו	*and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness*
באחרית הימים׃	*[in the latter days].*

Repentance and Reconciliation. The outcome in Hos. 3:5 must be understood in the context of Hosea's vision of Israel's future. The first word of the sentence, אחר ("afterwards"), is the harbinger that signals the beginning of salvation. It marks an advent of time subsequent to the punishment lasting for a number of days (ימים רבים) and suggests that the new era of healing is the result of the purifying days of having "no king or prince, no sacrifice or pillar, no ephod or teraphim" (v. 4), when Israel would have learned a lesson from the desert-experience lived all over again (cf. 2:16–17).

אחר ushers in not the end of time but the fulfillment of God's plan. The divine purpose is to be achieved within the course of history, not outside of it nor in the eschatological time envisioned by a glossator who appended "in the latter days." God takes the first step towards rapprochement and lets the course of time take its toll on Israel; he is no *deus ex machina*. The nation is to be transformed not with the magic wand of apocalyptic eschatology but with the hard lesson of

[15]Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion,* 173.

[16]The *ephod* was a ceremonial vestment with a pouch containing the *Urim* and *Thummim* which the priest used for divination. In the book of Samuel, whenever Saul or David asked for oracles, they asked the priest for an *ephod*.

[17]B. Gault, "Avenging Husband and Redeeming Lover?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 60:3 (2017): 494; D. Hubbard, *Hosea,* Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries Vol. 24 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 102.

history, with the devastation befalling it eventually leading to an inner conversion. Only when Israel herself is able to love in return will the final step to reconciliation have been reached.

There is no word for repentance in Biblical Hebrew; instead, the basic ethico-religious stance of a person/nation is often expressed by שׁוב ("to turn")[18] or other such words that set a direction, e.g., פנה ("to face"), בקשׁ ("to seek"), שׁחר ("to look for, aim at"), and דרשׁ ("to search"). It is the object of these words that defines religious attitude.[19] Conversion is thus articulated as a "turning to God" or as "seeking the Lord." This, in a sense, is a far more accurate way of describing the nature of true repentance, for it involves not just a change of heart and mind (*metanoia*) but also a change in life-orientation towards God.

Hos. 3:1–5 uses three of these words to illustrate the conversion of the people. In v. 1, we are told that the Lord loves them even though

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[18]According to W. Holladay, the *qal* שׁוב means "having moved in a particular direction, to move thereupon in the opposite direction, the implication being (unless there is evidence to the contrary) that one will arrive again at the initial point of departure" (*The Root šûbh in the Old Testament* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958], 53). E. Dietrich, on the other hand, argues that שׁוב does not necessarily imply a return to the place of departure (*Die Umkehr, Bekehrung und Buße, im Alten Testament und im Judentum* [Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1936], 8–10). Quite arbitrary, moreover, is R. Gordis's derivation of secondary meanings of שׁוב as "be at rest/peace" (in Hos. 14:8; Isa. 30:15; Jer. 4:1; 30:10; Ezk. 38:8; 2 Sam. 8:3) and as "trust, be secure/confident" (in Hos. 12:7; Jer. 8:6b; 49:4; Is. 47:10; Job 34:36; Prov. 1:32; Ps. 19:7) ("Some Hitherto Unrecognized Meanings of the Verb שׁוב," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 52 [1933]: 153–162).

[19]The verb שׁוב by itself is neutral—it can be used with the preposition מאחרי for turning away from God, i.e., "to apostatize" (Num. 14:43; 1 Sam. 15:11; 1 Kgs. 9:6; Jer. 3:19; cf. the noun משׁבה which means apostasy). Joined to the preposition אל־ (Jer. 3:7; 1 Kgs. 8:33, 48; Ps. 51:15), ל (Is. 31:6; Ps. 116:7), or עד־ (Am. 4:6, 8–11; Is. 9:12) with God as the goal, however, means to turn or return to God's favor, "to be converted." The verb שׁוב can also be used absolutely in this religious sense: "to repent" (Isa. 6:10; 10:22; Jer. 3:7, 12, 14, 22; 4:1; 5:3). See J. Thompson & E. Martens, *s.v.* "שׁוב," in W. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* Vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 55–59.

they *turn* (פנים) to other gods. This present participle indicates the prevailing apostasy/idolatry being committed. V. 5, however, says that the Israelites *shall turn* (ישובו) and *seek* (ובקשו) the Lord their God afterwards, i.e., after dwelling for many years without a king (*sc.* without political sovereignty) and without sacrifice or pillar (i.e., without cult). Notice the change from "turning to other gods" to "turning to and seeking the true God of Israel" in the religious orientation of the people. Indeed, "in the summons to conversion and the description of repentance, that which is done or that which will be done positively, etc. is called 'seeking God.'"[20]

In the absence of any complement that defines the direction of the action, ישובו may be translated by an English verb that does not need an object: "they shall repent" or "they shall return." Neither of these two, however, captures the exact nuance of ישובו—"repent" in modern languages can simply mean to rethink, to reevaluate one's position or attitude, to regret doing something. It loses the important connotation of redirecting one's life toward God. On the other hand, "return" can easily be taken as a physical rather than spiritual movement toward God. Some commentators, in fact, have misinterpreted ישובו here as a prediction of the return of the people from exile![21] It is true that Hosea has sometimes portrayed the coming punishment in terms of captivity in a foreign land, yet nowhere is the exile motif to be found in 3:1–5. The context clearly indicates a religious "return": ישובו stands not only in parallel with ובקשו which has God as its object but also in reversal of the apostasy of the people (הם פנים אל-אלהים אחרים) in v. 1.

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[20]S. Wagner, "בקש *biqqēš*" and "בקשה *baqqašah*," in G. Botterweck & H. Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 237. Hos. 5:15 and 7:10 as well as Dt. 4:29, Jer. 50:4, and 2 Chr. 7:14 have "seeking God" in the context of repentance.

[21]In a passage which has an unambiguous reference to the return of the exiles (Hos. 11:10–11), the verb used is the *hiphil* of the root *yšb* "to sit, dwell" (not to be confused with *šûḇ*): "I will make them dwell in their homes" or "I will settle them in their houses."

The Idiomatic Use of *šûḇ*. The absolute use of the verb שוב in Hos. 3:5 allows it to be construed as an auxiliary verb that has a translation value of "to do again." The whole phrase ובקשו … וישובו may be read as an idiom: "they shall seek *again*…,"[22] with the expression "they shall seek *again* God" (ובקשו את־יהוה) being used here in the context of reestablishing a relationship of love with God. This is strongly suggested by the context of marriage in Hos. 3:1–5 (cf. Hos. 2:9 where בקש describes the search for paramours). Here בקש carries with it an intense kind of inner yearning like that expressed in the Song of Songs: "I sought him whom my soul loves" (Ct. 3:1f; 5:6; 6:1). The direction set by שוב is set in motion by בקש toward an object of love and desire. The idiom "seek again" thus parodies the summons in v. 1 "go, love again.…"

Hosea, moreover, is aware of the rich cultic nuance that undergirds the formula "to seek the Lord" (בקש את־יהוה).[23] This stock phrase in 5:6 specifically refers to offering a sacrifice to God: "With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the Lord."[24] For a more enlightening exegesis of chapter 3, we may note that Hos. 5:15 uses the longer form "to seek the face of the Lord" (בקש פני יהוה or בקש את־פני יהוה) in connection with a penitential rite: "I the Lord will return to my place until they bear their guilt, then they shall seek my face.…"[25] The idiomatic use of שוב in 3:5—"they shall seek *again* the Lord" (ובקשו … וישובו את־יהוה)—may thus indicate a resumption of cultic sacrifice after many years without it (v. 4 *'ên zeḇaḥ*).[26] Only an authentic reconciliation with God will make the future offering of sacrifice possible.

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[22]שוב can be an auxiliary attached to a main verb, thereby modifying the action of that verb as a repetitive act ("to do again"). The idiom can also indicate a regressive sense, e.g., Hos. 2:11 *šûḇ* + *lqḥ* = "to take back."

[23]Wagner, "בקש *biqqēš*," 237–238.

[24]See 2 Chr. 11:16; 15:15. Zech. 8:21–22 refers to seeking God in the Jerusalem sanctuary, as does Ps. 27:7–14.

[25]See also Hos. 7:10; Jer. 50:4.

[26]R. Törnkvist interprets v. 5 as a reference to a "restored cult" (167), even if Hosea's end vision unfortunately "excludes the symbolic wives and sisters

In some contexts, the theological jargon "to seek the Lord" or "to seek the face of the Lord" can also mean to ask for an oracle, probably through the medium of a priest in a cult.[27] It is similar to the expression שׁאל יהוה ("to inquire of the Lord") used for the rite of divination, which is sometimes done with the help of an ephod.[28] This makes it reasonable to assume, then, that the idiom in Hos. 3:5 also implies the reopening of the channel of communication between God and his people after a time of rupture (v. 4 *'ên 'ēphôḏ*).

There is thus a legitimate place for cult in Hosea's vision of the future.[29] The suppression of cult foretold in v. 4 is probably due more to the fact that Hosea's contemporaries were not properly disposed

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from 'seeking' Yahweh" (169) (see *The Use and Abuse of Female Sexual Imagery in the Book of Hosea* [Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1998], 167–169).

[27]Ex. 33:7; 2 Sam. 21:1.

[28]It is clear that the ephod is used for consulting an oracle (1 Sam. 14:3, 18–19; 23:9; 1 Kgs. 2:26); indeed, its association with the *Urim* and *Thummin* may further suggest its use in divination (1 Sam. 23:2–4; 30:7–8; cf. Jgs. 18:5). And while there is obviously a very close connection between ephod and teraphim in the few passages where the ephod is not a cultic garment (Jgs. 17:5; 18:14, 17–18; Hos. 3:4), the nature of the relationship between them remains obscure. See C. Meyers, "Ephod," in D. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. II (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 550; G. Davies, "Ephod," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962), 118–119.

[29]J. Lecureux minimizes the place of cult in Hosea's vision of future restoration:

> what are noticeably absent are sacrificial offerings and other cultic items, including a specified location for this liturgical act.… Nowhere in this repentance statement do priests, altars, temples or burnt offerings appear. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case—the prophet has intentionally gone out of his way to offer an opportunity to engage with YHWH in a circumstance that purposefully avoids the cult and cultic instruments (see "Restored Hope? The Function of the Temple, Priest, and Cult as Restoration in the Book of the Twelve," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41:4 [2017]: 497).

to approach God than to an outright rejection of rituals as such.[30] In similar fashion, the cultic aspect of "seeking the Lord" in Hos. 5:4, 15 is, for Hosea, clearly subordinate to the internalized search for reconciliation and relationship with God based on *steadfast love* and *real knowledge* of him.

Indeed, the description "they shall come in dread to the Lord and his goodness" (ופחדו אל-יהוה אל-טובו) is another indication of the internal disposition that would characterize the people's reconciliation with God. As a verb or noun, פחד is often used in religious parlance to illustrate a reverent and submissive attitude toward God while the preposition אל- implies a movement toward the Lord and his goodness and further defines the goal of *yāšuḇû* which otherwise has no explicit object.

The parallel words יהוה ("the Lord") and טובו ("his goodness"), on the other hand, are hendiadys which may be translated as "the good Lord" or "his divine goodness."[31] The reference to the Lord's goodness is important in Hosea's concept of repentance—as another word for God's *ḥeseḏ*[32] which figures prominently as a covenant term of fidelity, *ṯûḇ* reminds Hosea's audience that the sinner's recourse to God is nothing else but a response to the faithfulness or goodness

[30]A. Moenikes ("The Rejection of Cult and Politics by Hosea," *Henoch* 19 [1997]: 3–15) tends to absolutize Hosea's rejection of the cult. Wagner's observation, however, is more nuanced:

> A cultic rite cannot be excluded a priori in Hos 3:5 (cf. v. 4!) and Jer 50:4 … even though these texts use the idea of conversion to express an internalizing of man's relationship with God. The much-discussed phenomenon of the criticism of the cult in ancient Israel (e.g., by the prophets) does not necessarily have to be understood in the sense of a rejection of the cult. ("בקשׁ *biqqĕš*," 237f)

[31]Cf. *ṯûḇ yhwh* in Ps. 27:13; Jer. 31:12–14.

[32]H. Stoebe, "חסד *ḥeseḏ* Bontà," *Dizionario Teologico dell'Antico Testamento* Vol. 1 (Torino: Marietti, 1978/82), 520–540; also "טוב *ṭôḇ* Buono" on pp. 565–575 of the same. See also G. Clark, *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible,* JSOT Sup. Ser. 157 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 259–260.

which the Lord himself has always shown to his people.[33] By "turning to God's goodness," the nation comes to be nourished once again by his fruit (cf. 14:9) and commits itself to do that which is good (cf. 14:3 as a reversal of 8:3!).

Hosea's Vision of Israel's Future. Hosea envisions a two-stage future for the nation: a) an indeterminate period (3:3 ימים רבים) of educative punishment followed afterwards (3:5 אחר) by b) repentance and reconciliation with God. This basic outline is easily recognized in the programmatic second chapter where the prophet allegorizes the history of God's relationship with Israel in terms of broken marriage (2:4–7 "harlotry"), forced isolation (2:8–9a "hedge"), deprivation/infertility (2:11–15), repentance (2:16–17), and restoration and reconciliation (2:18–25). The vision of the future for Israel as sketched by the prophet in Hos. 3:1–5 has a similar outline:

Present Sin:	• God's love for Israel despite its infidelity/apostasy (v. 1)
Punishment:	• forced isolation (vv. 2–3) and deprivation (v. 4)
Reconciliation:	• return to the Lord (v. 5)

Hos. 3:1–5 and the first two chapters preceding it exhibit many similarities as well as differences between them that have exercised the mind and imagination of exegetes and redaction critics.[34] One

[33]Just how central the covenant idea is in Hosea can be debated. M. Fox, however, sees *ṭûḇ* here as well as in Hos. 8:3 and Jer. 33:9 as a covenant terminology ("*Ṭôḇ* as Covenant Terminology," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 209 [1973]: 41–42). He argues on the basis of W. Moran's identification of *tbt'* in the Sefire treaties (1B 2, 1C 19-10, 1C 4-5) as a legal term for the amity established by the treaty. Moran notes similar usage of Akkadian *tubtu/tubu/tubutu* ("A Note on the Treaty Terminology of the Sefire Stelas," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 22:3 [1963]: 173–176).

[34]B. Renaud, "Le livret d'Osée 1–3. Un travail complexe d'édition," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 56:3 (1982): 159–178; B. Renaud, "Osée 1–3: Analyse diachronique et lecture synchronique, problèmes de méthode," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 57:4 (1983): 249–260; R. Gordis, "Hosea's Marriage and Message," 9–35; L. Ruppert, "Beobachtungen zur Literar- und Kompositionskritik von Hosea

thing is clear, however, regardless of how one explains their origin and interrelationship: Hos. 3:1–5 reiterates the fundamental insight propounded in the earlier chapters, namely, that punishment is part of God's plan to win back his people, and that his consummate love for an erring nation will ultimately elicit a response.[35] "She shall say, I will go and return to my first husband …" (2:9). "She shall answer as in the days of her youth …" (2:17). "Afterwards the Israelites shall repent and seek the Lord their God … and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness" (3:5).

1–3," *Künder des Wortes: Beiträge zur Theologie der Propheten,* Fs. J. Schreiner, hrsg. L. Ruppert, P. Weimar, & E. Zenger (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1982), 163–182; L. Ruppert, "Erwägungen zur Kompositions- und Redaktionsgeschichte von Hosea 1–3," *Biblische Zeitschrift Paderborn* 26:2 (1982): 208–223.

[35]K. Weingart, "Eine zweite Chance für Israel? Gericht und Hoffnung in Hos 3,1–5," *Biblica* 97:3 (2016): 342–359.

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INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Bridge or Barrier for a Culture of Communion?

Leo-Martin Angelo R. Ocampo

October 29 of next year will be the golden anniversary of the transmission of the first digital message, which was sent between two of the U.S. Defense Ministry's ARPAnet computers in 1969. This was the birth of the Internet, and the groundbreaking test run was both happy and foreboding. Charley Kline was trying to send the simple prompt "LOGIN" from UCLA to Bill Duvall at Stanford Research Institute about 350 miles away. Only the first two letters were sent before the system crashed, however, making the very first digital message one that was lost in transmission. Nevertheless, the full message was successfully relayed an hour later after a reboot, and the rest is history.[1]

Last year, the French bishops' conference came up with a document entitled "Eglise en réseaux—Quelle communion à l'ère du numérique?" In this pastoral text, they described "digital networks" as a "huge challenge" and "double-sided issue" while asking, "What kind of communion is possible in the digital age?" This article as such aims to explore the challenges to and opportunities in the way people relate

[1]G. Raz, "'Lo' and Behold: A Communication Revolution," *National Public Radio* (October 29, 2009). Available at https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=114280698 (accessed January 25, 2018).

to one another other as posed by the Internet and social media as well as how these rapidly evolving technologies can be a bridge or barrier for a culture of communion.

Network of Networks

It is not an unknown fact that the Internet was originally developed as a communication mechanism for war. It began with ARPANET (Advanced Research Project Agency Network) which was under the wing of the U.S. government's DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) and only in the 1980s was its use expanded to non-military purposes—specifically for academic cooperation and the sharing of knowledge—through the initiative of the National Science Foundation. The World Wide Web, which further expanded the function and reach of the Internet, was also beginning its development at around this time.

In its primary stage or Web 1.0, the Internet was called the "web of information connections"[2] or what I have called the "informative web."[3] It consisted of individual sites or pages that contained information and which were located on "servers" that were physically separated from one another but connected through the Internet. More than just a static collection of websites functioning like a type of virtual library, however, the Internet continued to evolve as a dynamic "information highway" for sharing knowledge across the globe. We thus have the terms "web" and "net," highly evocative images that highlight its

[2]These descriptors are taken from S. Aghaei, M. Nematbakhsh, and H. Farsani ("Evolution of the World Wide Web: From Web 1.0 to Web 4.0," *International Journal of Web & Semantic Technology* 3:1 [January 2012]. Available at http://www.ftsm.ukm.my/ss/Book/EVOLUTION%20OF%20WWW.pdf [accessed February 28, 2017]).

[3]You may want to see a lengthier discussion about the evolution of the World Wide Web and how religions in Asia have responded to it in L.-M. Ocampo, "How to Communicate in the Age of Web 4.0?: Challenges and Possibilities for Religions in Asia," *Religion and Social Communication* 14:2 (2016): 106–121.

interconnectivity; indeed, the term "Internet" itself means "network of networks," a connection of connections that effectively link not only machines but also the people who are using them. As Allemang and Hendler said, "essential to the notion of the Web is the idea of an open community."[4]

Many were quick to harness this potential by coming up with their own websites to establish their presence online and make key documents and other important information available to their followers. A simple website on Web 1.0, for instance, can serve as a community's bulletin board or newsletter which can be accessed more conveniently and produced more economically compared to its physical world counterpart. Making information such as schedules and announcements readily available may seem very trivial indeed, but doing so is very important not only for keeping members well informed but also for building their sense of belonging and community. As Eilers said, "informed people are happier people because they feel part of the Church and/or the organization they belong to."[5]

Making data available to many instead of limiting it to a privileged few also empowers as many stakeholders as there are those who have access to such information. This in turn can lead to increased participation in affairs and issues concerning the community. For instance, combining the Freedom of Information laws that we now have with the availability of public records in digital format allows the general public to access vital data held by their governments. This enables even ordinary citizens to not only be informed about matters concerning them but also engage more actively (and intelligently!) in public discourse and hold their government officials and agencies accountable. As Tapscott remarked about the technology-savvy generation:

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[4]D. Allemang & J. Hendler, *Semantic Web for the Working Ontologist: Effective Modeling in RDFS and OWL*, 2nd ed. (Waltham, MA: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 2011), 2.

[5]F.-J. Eilers, *Communicating in Ministry and Mission: An Introduction to Pastoral and Evangelizing Communication* (Manila: Logos Publications Inc., 2009), 180.

> they want to be involved directly: to interact with [their governments], contribute ideas, scrutinize their actions, work to catalyze initiatives not just during elections but as they govern. And they will insist on integrity from politicians.… They are going to shake up both politics and government.[6]

Similarly for the religious sphere, we now have veritable theological libraries on the web for at least all the major religions. In fact, these are often better equipped, more efficiently searched, and easily available compared to libraries we find in typical local faith communities and even in seminaries or training institutes for religious leaders. This allows the laity, who have been for the most part only passive receivers of doctrine, to study and explore more freely and directly even complex topics that used to fall within the exclusive domain of clergy and scholars. Anyone these days who has an Internet connection can have first-hand access to sacred texts and other key sources of doctrine as well as to varying theological currents and opinions, thereby short-circuiting the process of doctrinal reception. "For the first time, lay people can easily separate religious commands from tradition by looking at holy texts and scholarship rather than [by] relying on local preachers."[7] They are enabled, therefore, to engage religious leaders not only in dialogue and discussion but also in debate and dispute as well as—later on, perhaps—in deliberation and decision-making. Sharing information leads to shared knowledge and power which, in turn, potentially leads to the sharing of authority, responsibility, and leadership.

The original capability of the Internet for connectivity would expand even more as it became bi-directional and more dynamic with the addition of a "write-function." In this second stage of the Internet or Web 2.0—which has also been called the "web of people connections" or what I would call the "interactive web," regular users

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[6]D. Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009), 244.

[7]"Islam and Technology: The Online Ummah," *The Economist* (August 18, 2012). Available at http://www.economist.com/node/21560541 (accessed February 28, 2017).

can now upload their own content to various online platforms such as *Friendster, Multiply,* or *Blogger*—and, later on, to *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, etc. They can also interact with fellow users in many ways such as through liking/reacting and asking/commenting on posts. Such developments would in turn give rise to online communities or "digital networks" that are formed and bonded by what is aptly termed "*social* media." These online individuals, now known as "netizens," form a virtual "global village" that is inhabited today by at least 3.7 billion people, a true "digital continent" where users are intertwined in a "fabric of communications."[8]

Social media platforms are meant by design to facilitate and host interaction among their users. Facebook, the most popular example, was inspired by social directories customarily given to university students in the United States to encourage them to get acquainted with their schoolmates. The platform began by linking people from the same town, school, or office and has since evolved in its capability to connect users with all kinds of commonalities. Indeed, this social character of the Web coincides with the findings of a recent survey done by the Global Web Index in January of 2018 which show that the most prevalent motivation of almost half of social network users today is in fact social in nature: "to stay in touch with what my friends are doing" (42%). As a matter of fact, most of the other motivations that made it to the top ten of the survey results are patently relational: at fifth place, we have "general networking with other people" (34%); at sixth, "because a lot of my friends are on them" (33%); at seventh and

[8]Benedict XVI, *The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word* [message for the 44th World Communications Day] (January 24, 2010). Available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20100124_44th-world-communications-day.html. See also Benedict XVI, *New Technologies, New Relationships: Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship* [message for the 43rd World Communications Day] (January 24, 2009). Available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20090124_43rd-world-communications-day.html.

eighth, "to share photos or videos with others" (32%) and "to share my opinion" (30%); and at tenth place, "to meet new people" (27%).[9]

Aside from posts, comments, and reactions which are public, another important aspect of social media platforms is their private messaging feature which makes them a cheaper and more convenient alternative for communication compared to the telephone or mobile, allowing family and friends from and in different parts of the world to stay in touch with one another. The online experience is enhanced even further with photo and video messaging, along with other cosmetic effects like emojis, animated stickers, and GIF images. Even work is made more efficient and cost-effective through collaborative features such as "digital brainstorms"[10] and web-conferencing in platforms and applications such as *Dropbox, Google Docs, Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, Quip*, and many others.

Many social media platforms also allow users to create and maintain some form of "blog," a truncation of the word "weblog" which refers to an informal personal website that features mostly casual and motley diary-style entries. A user's Facebook profile, for instance, is basically a blog made up of texts and images while Instagram is a visual blog. Twitter, on the other hand, is a micro blog where entries were originally limited to 140 characters; this limit has since doubled to 280. Composed of various pieces of content that one creates or shares, these blogs serve as one's online address and represent one's online image. A well-designed and engaging weblog gives positive online representation for a person or group, which in turn can attract and generate even more social media connections. One post going viral is sometimes enough, in fact, to make one an overnight Internet celebrity with followers and subscribers in the millions. By publishing such blogs online, social media users keep each other constantly updated about

[9]O. Valentine, "Top 10 Reasons for Using Social Media," *Global Web Index*. Available at https://blog.globalwebindex.net/chart-of-the-day/social-media/ (accessed February 15, 2018).

[10]Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital,* 262.

their personal lives, with some going as far as if they were seeing each other every day or every hour.

Caincross signaled as early as 1997 the "Death of Distance"[11] as one of the consequences of this revolution in social communications. The Internet's social function has become so important that it has also been influential in determining how the Internet has been taking shape, with its other operations such as for commerce, industry, and education being built around this key feature. Parks noted this *interpersonalization* of digital media, pointing out that

> social life, including important interpersonal relationships, may have become *mediatized*, but it is also the case that media have become *interpersonalized*. As we have seen, the media that individuals use for communication have become increasingly aligned with the rhythms and structure of their personal relationships and social networks.[12]

As such, many of the online platforms and applications currently in circulation are designed to mimic or at least integrate with their social media counterparts. *Edmodo*, for instance, is a popular Learning Management System that appears and functions like Facebook but with an explicit educational purpose. Another example is in online gaming where the trend is leaning in the direction of interactive and collaborative multiplayer games. Thus, while it may seem at first that gamers are withdrawing *from* human society and into the world of online games, we can also say that they are being immersed in another human society that exists *within* the world of online games.

And yet even more recently, many of the online platforms have begun carrying an added component that is characteristic of Web 3.0, also known as the "web of knowledge connections" or what I call the "intuitive web." This main feature of the third stage in the development of the Internet, which reached more than one billion websites in 2014,

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[11]F. Cairncross, *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution Will Change Our Lives* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1997).

[12]M. Parks, "Embracing the Challenges and Opportunities of Mixed-Media Relationships," *Human Communication Research* 43:4 (2017): 513.

is the ability to link, structure, and integrate massive amounts of online data to make content more "user-sensitive" and thereby more relevant and responsive to each individual. Many websites and applications automatically filter, adjust, and refine the content that is presented to each particular user on the basis of their standing online activity, search and usage history, and other personal data such as age, gender, and location which they themselves provided (whether voluntarily and consciously or otherwise). This is made possible through the use of data-driven programmed responses called "algorithms." In this way, online platforms determine what pages you will likely find interesting, what things you are likely to purchase when advertised to you, and what kind of people you are likely to enjoy connecting with. They will then lead you to the specific kind of content that will engage you and to like-minded people that you will enjoy interacting with.

This heightened ability to determine and propose the precise online connections that users are likely to click and get hooked on exponentially raises the capacity of digital technology to connect people with one another. With a power that no technology before it has ever had, Web 3.0 is able to create and strengthen bonds between individuals across the globe through its capacity for determining the precise matter that can create, nurture, and sustain those bonds—from having the same background, occupation, or industry to sharing similar philosophical, religious, or political beliefs or simply enjoying the same sports, games, or hobbies. At the same time, the advent of tablets and smartphones that people can carry around with them, along with the development of wireless Internet connectivity, has now made it possible for us to stay online almost constantly.

As Web 3.0 continues to develop its capacity to link, structure, and integrate not only online but now offline data as well, we find capabilities emerging that have important ramifications for the way people connect. Through applications like *Grab* and *Uber* or *AirBnB*, for instance, the Internet links drivers with their passengers and transients with available lodging. In the field of education, more and more academic institutions are already offering Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that allow an unlimited number of people to enroll

and participate in a class regardless of their schedule or location. Even the matchmaking capabilities of the Internet—the latter has been used to connect seekers with potential mates long before Web 3.0—have also been significantly enhanced given the amount of personal data that can be gathered and processed this time around. Private offline experiences become online shared ones, such as when people who are viewing the same show on television in the privacy of their own homes chat and interact with fellow viewers through the use of official hashtags,[13] and any event nowadays can be readily broadcast and streamed live through a social media platform, allowing people to watch and take part from their own place and at their own convenient time. Indeed, the Internet of today carries with it a greater potential to influence offline realities such as the outcome of electoral processes, e.g., as seen in the campaigns of Obama, Trump, and Duterte. It also has the ability to shape public opinion, galvanize people for specific causes, and even spark revolutions as in the case of the Arab Spring.

In light of this progression, Aghaei et al. envisage that the coming Web 4.0 will become a "web of intelligence connections" or what I would call the "integrative web." According to their prediction, it will be a symbiotic and not just semantic web that is characterized by a much more permeable and seamless "interaction between humans and machines in symbiosis."[14] The walls will blur between online and offline, and there will be a "fusion of horizons" between the Internet and the world outside of it. As we see more people spend more of their time online, virtual reality will now become their new habitual reality while reality itself becomes more and more permeated by the Internet as it becomes even more pervasive, more ubiquitous, and more omnipresent.

In fact, Meredith Gould has already suggested that the distinctions between real and virtual are no longer as helpful as they once were

[13]A. Raney & Q. Ji, "Entertaining Each Other? Modeling the Socially Shared Television Viewing Experience: Social TV Entertainment," *Human Communication Research* 43:4 (2017): 425–426.

[14]Aghaei et al., "Evolution of the World Wide Web: From Web 1.0 to Web 4.0," 8.

back when social media was still in its early stages. An expert in the religious use of social media, she points out for instance that "online communities of faith are *real* to members who have come to rely on them for inspiration and support.…"[15] She also mentions that participants in a September 4, 2012 #ChSocM Twitter chat have begun to stop the use of the acronym IRL ("in real life"), and there has even been a suggestion to replace it with ITF ("in the flesh").[16] For these individuals, online human interactions may not be physical but are real and personal nonetheless, involving real people and fostering real relationships.

Though it may still be an issue for digital migrants, digital natives appear to no longer find difficulty in seeing online relationships as true and real, with many families and friends in global diaspora remaining intimately connected through various Internet platforms. For them, the Internet is not only a "tool" but also a "space" where people can meet and love each other. Janet Murray refers to this as the "spatial affordance" of the Internet, that which denotes the capacity of digital media to function as a kind of space that people inhabit.[17] The Internet in this sense has evolved from being a mere highway or nexus to a place or locus of gathering. Can it serve, then, as a locus for connection and communion, and perhaps not only among human persons but also with the Divine?

On November 2, 2001, John Paul II published the encyclical *Ecclesia in Oceania* over the Internet. Also worthy of note are highly useful apps such as the *iBreviary* and *iMissal* as well as corresponding tools for Confession, the Rosary, and the Examen that serve as aids to liturgy and piety. There are also virtual shrines and prayer sites such as for online retreats, recollections, and *Visita Iglesia*—in the German

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[15]M. Gould, *The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 30.

[16]Gould, *The Social Media Gospel*, 30.

[17]See J. Murray, *Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interaction Design as a Cultural Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 51–87.

city on the Internet called *FunCity*,[18] for instance, there has even been a virtual parish named St. Bonifatius which has been shepherding souls online since 1998. Not only does it have a full staff of nine pastoral workers who take turns to be available for parishioners online, it also has a functioning library, oratory, and, more recently, a virtual cloister where you can drop notes such as prayer requests for religious who will read and respond to them.

2013 was a special year for Catholicism and the Internet. Before the first blessing of the then newly-elected Pope Francis, Jean Cardinal Tauran added "the new means of social communication" as a medium on top of radio and television by which the faithful who were remotely following the events in St. Peter's Square could gain the plenary indulgence attached to the blessing. It was the first time that this was ever done for indulgences. The same concession was then given to those who followed the events of the 28th World Youth Day, held that year in Rio de Janeiro, through social media accounts like Facebook and Twitter, albeit with the condition that this was to be done "always with the proper devotion"[19] (it nevertheless caused quite a stir among more conservative circles). In addition, the Apostolic Penitentiary also granted a plenary indulgence within that year for the faithful who made the virtual pilgrimage to Lourdes as organized by the North American Lourdes Volunteers.[20] Indeed, such gestures can be understood as tacit affirmations of the potential of cyberspace to be a sacred space where one can really encounter God and receive grace.

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[18]See the website of *FunCity* at http://funama.de/.

[19]Apostolic Penitentiary, *Decree … according to which Special Indulgences are Granted to the Faithful on the Occasion of the 28th World Youth Day* (Rome: June 24, 2013). Available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/tribunals/apost_penit/documents/rc_trib_appen_doc_20130709_decreto-indulgenze-gmg_en.html (accessed October 12, 2017).

[20]See https://lourdesvolunteers.org/plenary-indulgence/ (accessed October 12, 2018).

Nevertheless, the Church at the same time appears to keep a rather strict sense of boundary and reserve regarding the practice of religion online:

> Virtual reality is no substitute for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the sacramental reality of the other sacraments, and shared worship in a flesh-and-blood human community. There are no sacraments on the Internet; and even the religious experiences possible there by the grace of God are insufficient apart from real-world interaction with other persons of faith.[21]

One cardinal was even quoted as saying that we should not pray with our smartphones despite the fact that many young and not-so-young Catholics find this practice to be helpful.[22]

Internet as Threat

In his keynote lecture at the opening of Theology Week at the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, Manila in January 2018, Charles Maung Cardinal Bo shared his experience of seeing some Buddhist monks engrossed in social media instead of meditating. The monks that he saw were actually no different from many of our own people today, especially the youth, who constantly check the Internet and social media on their tablets and smartphones. This points us to the other side of the reality of the Web—as the potential enemy of communion, exacerbated by the threat of Internet addiction which is beginning to take hold of many people, oftentimes without their noticing it. As Nicholas Carr pointed out, "[The Internet] is so much our servant that it would seem churlish to notice that it is also our master."[23]

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[21]Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *The Church and Internet,* 9. Available at https://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/pcscchnt.htm.

[22]C. Garden, "Cardinal Sarah says we shouldn't pray with our phones. I'm not so sure," *Catholic Herald* (September 21, 2017). Available at https://catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2017/09/21/cardinal-sarah-says-we-shouldnt-pray-with-our-phones-im-not-so-sure/(accessed October 12, 2017).

[23]N. Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 4.

Sometimes referred to as "PIU" (Problematic Internet Use) or "CIU" (Compulsive Internet Use), "Internet addiction" simply put pertains to "excessive Internet use that interferes with daily life."[24] When one, for instance, is unable to focus on work or study because of constant distraction from using the Internet, one would already qualify as suffering from PIU or CIU under this rubric. We must note, however, that "Internet addiction" as such has yet to gain formal recognition and definition from the field of psychiatry—in the fifth and latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) which came out in November 2013, "Internet gaming disorder" was identified as a "condition for further study," i.e., a probable mental disorder subject to validation and confirmation, while addiction to the Internet itself was not mentioned.[25]

Nevertheless, addiction to the Internet is becoming more noticeable. This can already be observed in Western (and Westernized) cultures in what is called Generation Z or the Post-Millennials, those born within the years 1995–2012. They are the first to be dubbed as "digital natives" who became adept at using cyber technology from an early age. Among those surveyed by a 2015 study conducted by Microsoft in Canada, for example, 77% of those aged 18–24 said that they usually reach for their mobile phone when nothing is occupying their attention while 52% check their phone every thirty minutes at the least.[26] Such statistics, while seemingly harmless, may actually be symptoms of a developing compulsion. Indeed, the time people spend online can reach up to as much as nine hours a day for the Internet, with four of those hours devoted to social media.[27] This can potentially

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[24]S. Byun et al., "Internet Addiction: Metasynthesis of 1996–2006 Quantitative Research," *Cyberpsychology & Behavior* 12:2 (2009): 204.

[25]See American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013), 797–798.

[26]See Consumer Insights—Microsoft Canada, *Attention Spans* (Spring 2015). Available at http://dl.motamem.org/microsoft-attention-spans-research-report.pdf.

[27]We Are Social & Hootsuite, *Digital in 2017: Global Overview* (January 24, 2017). Available at http://wearesocial.com/sg/blog/2017/01/digital-in-2017-global-overview (accessed April 3, 2017).

affect one's productivity and take time away from other activities like physical, face-to-face bonding with friends and family even when doing so is possible. One study, for instance, reports that some students in China prefer online to offline social interaction and resort to overuse of the Internet as a means of escaping societal pressure.[28]

People may thus be physically present with each other yet mentally and emotionally absent from one another because they are actually more present online. Turkle described this phenomenon with the oxymoron "alone together."[29] Indeed, there are those who maintain that authentic human connection or communion is not really possible on the Web. As one study on Buddhism and the Internet gathered:

> Not everyone agreed that Buddhism online offered a spiritual connection to others. One respondent said that they only felt community online as they would with the rest of the world and that the Internet was *for information and not communion.* Another respondent said, "I feel a sense of community when I look into one's eyes."[30]

A study in 2014, moreover, linked the use of Facebook to depressive symptoms.[31] Even without direct cyberbullying, the self-esteem of users fluctuated as they saw other users' posts and the reactions these garnered while unconsciously comparing themselves to others. In line with this, we also have the phenomenon of "FOMO" or the "Fear of Missing Out," which is rooted in the same unhealthy dynamics of

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[28]See L. Zhang, C. Amos, & W. McDowell, "A Comparative Study of Internet Addiction between the United States and China," *Cyberpsychology & Behavior* 11:6 (2008): 727–729. See also C.-F. Yen, J.-Y. Yen, & C.-H. Ko, "Internet Addiction: Ongoing Research in Asia," *World Psychiatry* 9:2 (2010): 97 as well as F. Cao & L. Su, "Internet Addiction among Chinese Adolescents: Prevalence and Psychological Features," *Child: Care, Health and Development* 33:3 (2007): 275–281.

[29]See S. Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

[30]A. Ostrowski, "Buddha Browsing: American Buddhism and the Internet," *Contemporary Buddhism* 7:1 (2006): 99 (emphasis added).

[31]See M.-L. Steers, R. Wickham, & L. Acitelli, "Seeing Everyone Else's Highlight Reels: How Facebook Usage is Linked to Depressive Symptoms," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 33:8 (2014): 701–731.

social comparison and feeds on the strong narcissistic tendencies of young people: "They're having exciting experiences that you're not. They attended the hottest concert in town and you didn't.… Person after person is having the time of their lives. And you? Well, not so much."[32] The irony, however, is that people remain hooked to the Internet and to social media in spite of this, constantly checking for updates for the same reason that they do not want to miss out on the latest "trending" content. As the character Stuart said in the British sitcom *Vicious*, "They make me nervous, all these young people, skittering about like mice, desperate to get back to the Internet." Hence, they end up trapped in a wide-open cage:

> Addicted to pocket computers, such as smartphones and tablets, anxious teenagers are constantly monitoring their popularity among their peers, tormented by feelings of inadequacy and doubt. Easy access to pornography fosters this paranoia, offering a distorted image of human bodies and relationships. Unchecked, all of this transparent neurosis can lead to a disastrous loss of privacy, to the torture of being bullied, to self-harm and despair.[33]

If such can be said of Generation Z, what more can be said of the upcoming generation which they propose to call Generation A? These are the true "digital natives" who were raised by "iNanny" and who learned their rudiments from online applications such as "ABC Letters," "Busy Shapes," and "E-Flash Apps." For them, the digital world from the onset has been cradle, home, and school in place of exposure to intimate human interaction. Hence, while there may be efforts on the part of some parents and teachers to adopt a more analog or at least a mixed approach, the trend is pointing to a more pervasive influence of digital technology on this generation which is likely to be even more attached to it compared to the previous one.[34]

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[32]L. Sapadin, "Fear of Missing Out," *PsychCentral* (2015). Available at https://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2015/10/12/fear-of-missing-out/ (accessed April 3, 2017).

[33]D. O'Leary, "Missing the Point," *The Tablet* (January 23, 2014): 8.

[34]For some pioneering explorations in several directions, see the article of N. Bilton, "The Child, the Tablet and the Developing Mind" (*The New York*

Thus, while formal recognition from experts is still pending, Internet addiction has been gaining acknowledgement and attention from many clinical practitioners who have begun to pin down its symptoms and effects. Dr. Richard Graham, for instance, who runs the first rehabilitation center for technology addiction in Britain, has identified five major indicators of Internet addiction, namely: lack of interest in other activities, constant talk or distraction about technology, mood swings, withdrawal symptoms, and devious or maladaptive behavior connected to using the Internet. Among these symptoms, Dr. Graham singles out withdrawal to be the clear sign of addiction as evidenced by signs of "severe distress and agitation" whenever one is separated from the Internet, analogous to how alcohol, drug, or tobacco dependents crave a "hit" at regular intervals.[35] Many practitioners as such have actually begun to recognize and address what the Center for Internet Addiction has already called "a growing epidemic"[36] even before its formal recognition as a mental disorder in the DSM.

Aside from the direct effects that we have mentioned above, what concerns us especially are the harmful consequences that high exposure to the Internet and digital technology can have for individuals, particularly for the communicative and social skills of those who are overexposed to such, with their capacity to connect and commune with other people gradually being eroded. For example, Small quoted a Stanford University study which found that traditional face-to-face interaction time dropped by almost thirty minutes for every hour spent in front of a computer screen. Essential social skills like understanding emotional contexts and reading non-verbal cues tended to decline, and there was a greater likelihood of misinterpreting such contexts

Times [March 31, 2013]. Available at https://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/31/disruptions-what-does-a-tablet-do-to-the-childs-mind/).

[35]V. Woollaston, "The Five Signs Your Child is Addicted to their iPad—and How to Give Them a 'Digital Detox,'" *MailOnline* (October 30, 2013). Available at http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2479109/The-signs-child-addicted-iPad--digital-detox.html (accessed April 3, 2017).

[36]See http://netaddiction.com/.

and cues or missing them altogether which in turn can lead to more frequent misunderstandings.[37]

Another concern that has been pointed out is the constant exposure to gadgets especially from an early age, which can hinder the development of the capacity not only to relate with other people but also to be alone and relate with oneself. In this manner, the dynamic struggle involved in relating with others and with oneself is readily replaced with the comfortable complacency of dealing with machines instead, or what has been called "robotic companionship."[38] Picking up one's gadget to browse social media or play online games automatically occupies every available time that could have been spent in social interaction or quiet reflection. This kind of tendency is especially magnified in the case of individuals who are already lonely and depressed to begin with, who are more likely to resort to online social interaction as a convenient replacement for offline human interaction which demands relatively more depth, intensity, and intimacy. Such withdrawal can spiral into other destructive dynamics, including but not limited to Compulsive or Problematic Internet Use.[39]

The wide repercussions of this loss not only of the skills but also of the gusto for intimate and authentic human interaction can only be imagined. How do we build communion among individuals who would rather relate through or *with* gadgets? Similarly affected is the capacity to commune with God and with oneself, especially when a person is constantly and incessantly preoccupied with such devices and there is no more room for silence or deep prayer. As Carr avers, "There is no Sleepy Hollow on the Internet, no peaceful spot where contemplativeness can work its restorative magic."[40] The person who

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[37]See G. Small & G. Vorgan, *iBrain: Surviving the Technological Alteration of the Modern Mind* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).

[38]See Turkle, *Alone Together*.

[39]See S. Caplan, "Preference for Online Social Interaction: A Theory of Problematic Internet Use and Psychosocial Well-Being," *Communication Research* 30:6 (2003): 625–628.

[40]Carr, *The Shallows*, 220.

is constantly hooked to the digital realm may end up progressively isolated and empty, unable to relate or simply be present with other people, with God, and even with oneself:

> Minds wander. Attention drifts. But we've never carried on our person a tool that so insistently captivates our senses and divides our attention. By connecting us to a symbolic elsewhere, the smartphone … exiles us from the here and now. We lose the power of presence.[41]

We add to this the many other ways by which the Internet and social media directly serve as a hindrance to communion, counteracting and sometimes almost overturning their gift for human connection. Indeed, connection does not always translate to communion. The same Web 1.0 that promotes inclusion and participation, for instance, can also become the source of exclusion. With "digital literacy" becoming as important as traditional literacy, the "computer illiterate" are the new illiterate who are marginalized and disadvantaged in many ways, from education and employment to social access. Educational systems that are already hard put in combating traditional illiteracy struggle to integrate computer literacy in their school curricula. Companies that are mechanized and digitalized gain an advantage over those that use analog means of production which depend heavily on human labor; as a consequence, there is growing pressure to shift more and more to mechanization and digitalization, which in turn leads to the displacement especially of low-skilled laborers. Internet penetration levels and other related variables such as connection speed, cost, and availability are thus shifting the playing field on both the national and international scale in favor of those on the greener side of the "digital divide" while those on the other side are being left out.

Improved information dissemination leading to empowerment and greater participation can also result in increased conflict instead of increased harmony. The faithful who are now more informed but not necessarily more discerning can, for instance, become more critical and defiant toward their religious authorities who in turn are not always

[41]N. Carr, *The Glass Cage: How Our Computers are Changing Us* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), 200.

ready to deal with dissent and differences of opinion in a constructive manner. Last year, a starlet turned blogger who later on became a government official argued on social media for the return of the death penalty. She offered an exegesis of a passage from the Torah, claiming that the fifth commandment is more accurately translated as "Thou Shalt Not Murder" instead of "Thou Shalt Not Kill," and ended her post by saying, "With all due respect to the priests, people today are now able to read the Bible so when you quote, make sure that you quote in context."[42] The said post quickly went viral, generating more than 36,000 reactions, 2,300 comments, and 10,000 shares. Yet popularity is not the best barometer of veracity—as the Caribbean bishops lamented, "we have far more access to information but sometimes less access to truth,"[43] even with the convenience of the Internet at our fingertips.

The world of social media as such is pregnant not only with opportunities but also with threats to a culture of communion. While the Internet has truly become a web and net of human connectivity, the same network of networks is exploited to facilitate pornography, prostitution, and human trafficking—including the involvement of minors and children. One source, for instance, estimates that 28,258 users are watching pornography on the Internet every second while 35% of all Internet downloads are related to pornography.[44] According to *Thorn*, a non-profit organization dedicated to combating child pornography, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children was reviewing 25 million images every year or about 480,769 images

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[42]M. Uson, Facebook post (February 19, 2017, 10:28 P.M.). Available at https://www.facebook.com/Mochablogger/ (accessed February 15, 2018).

[43]Antilles Episcopal Conference, *Being Church in a Digital Milieu: A Pastoral Letter on Communications from the Bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference* (August 6, 2017), 26. Available at http://aecbishops.org/a-pastoral-letter-new-ways-of-being-church-in-a-digital-milieu/.

[44]Webroot, "Internet Pornography by the Numbers: A Significant Threat to Society," *Webroot*. Available at https://www.webroot.com/us/en/home/resources/tips/digital-family-life/internet-pornography-by-the-numbers (accessed February 15, 2018).

per week in the aftermath of the pornography explosion brought about by the Internet.[45] Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, meanwhile, are likewise being used in human trafficking, from the recruitment of potential victims to advertisement and marketing.[46] In this way, the Internet's capacity to connect people is abused for the wrong purposes and those who are involved are dehumanized instead of uplifted. As Pope Francis remarked in his address to the participants of the "World Congress on Child Dignity in the Digital World,"

> We encounter extremely troubling things on the net, including the spread of ever more extreme pornography, since habitual use raises the threshold of stimulation; the increasing phenomenon of *sexting* between young men and women who use the social media; and the growth of online bullying, a true form of moral and physical attack on the dignity of other young people. To this can be added *sextortion;* the solicitation of minors for sexual purposes, now widely reported in the news; to say nothing of the grave and appalling crimes of online trafficking in persons, prostitution, and even the commissioning and live viewing of acts of rape and violence against minors in other parts of the world. The net has its dark side (the "dark net"), where evil finds ever new, effective and pervasive ways to act and to expand.[47]

We also note the proliferation of fake news which has become commonplace as of late. People get their news more and more from the Internet nowadays, where it can be had almost in real time, instead of through newspapers, radio, and television. There are, however, no gatekeepers of information on the Internet to assure the veracity

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[45]"Child Pornography and Abuse Statistics," *Thorn.* Available at https://www.wearethorn.org/child-pornography-and-abuse-statistics/ (accessed February 15, 2018).

[46]USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership & Policy, *Human Trafficking Online: Cases and Patterns*, University of Southern California. Available at https://technologyandtrafficking.usc.edu/report/human-trafficking-online-cases-patterns/ (accessed February 15, 2018).

[47]Francis, address to the participants at the congress on *Child Dignity in the Digital World* (October 6, 2017). Available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco_20171006_congresso-childdignity-digitalworld.html (accessed February 15, 2018).

and accuracy of posted content. This situation is thus abused by unscrupulous individuals who deliberately sow disinformation on the Web to advance their own agenda.

A recent study describes how such "networked disinformation production" has already evolved into an underground industry right here in the Philippines: "an invisible machine: industrial in its scope and organization, strategic in its outlook and expertise, and exploitative in its morality and ethics."[48] Those involved in this systematic spread of disinformation "hijack people's sentiments and sow public divisiveness" as well as "silence political dissent and enact historical revisionism."[49] The rapid spread of fake news, moreover, is fueled not only by the work of trolls and bots but also by the feelings and ignorance of people who uncritically believe and share such reports, especially those that are in line with their own opinions or sentiments:

> Since anyone can easily create a blog or website, misleading and damaging information that sow discord and misunderstanding is likewise very easy to spread through the Internet in the form of fake news or rumors. These rumors are usually self-propelling and quickly become viral, especially since they feed on the emotions or sentiments of a particular group who are likely to spread them by clicking, liking and sharing.[50]

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[48]J. Ong & J. Cabañes, "Architects of Networked Disinformation: Behind the Scenes of Troll Accounts and Fake News Production in the Philippines: An Executive Summary," *The Newton Tech4dev Network* (2018). Available at http://newtontechfordev.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Architects-of-Networked-Disinformation-Executive-Summary-Final.pdf (accessed February 15, 2018), 3.

[49]J. Ong & J. Cabañes, "Architects of Networked Disinformation: Behind the Scenes of Troll Accounts and Fake News Production in the Philippines," *The Newton Tech4dev Network* (2018). Available at http://newtontechfordev.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ARCHITECTS-OF-NETWORKED-DISINFORMATION-FULL-REPORT.pdf (accessed February 15, 2018), 61.

[50]A. Olcott, "Rumor—The Evil Twin of Strategic Communication," in G. Dalziel, ed., *Rumor and Communication in Asia in the Internet Age* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), 161.

The situation is made even worse, however, by the algorithmic function of the intuitive web as it adjusts and refines the contents that it presents to each user in social media, effectively locking the person up in a narrow "echo chamber" where only sympathetic opinions are heard and all opposition is effectively filtered out. As Francis said in his message for this year's World Communications Day:

> The difficulty of unmasking and eliminating fake news is due also to the fact that many people interact in homogeneous digital environments impervious to differing perspectives and opinions. *Disinformation* thus thrives on the absence of healthy confrontation with other sources of information that could effectively challenge prejudices and generate constructive dialogue; instead, it risks turning people into unwilling accomplices in spreading biased and baseless ideas. The tragedy of disinformation is that it discredits others, presenting them as enemies, to the point of demonizing them and fomenting conflict. Fake news is a sign of intolerant and hypersensitive attitudes, and leads only to the spread of arrogance and hatred. That is the end result of untruth.[51]

This kind of hate speech can be very cruel and virulent; like fake news, it can spread quickly at digital speed and result in irreversible damage. We have, for instance, the recent case of Fr. James Martin, S.J., a Catholic priest and author who used to be a very popular personality both offline and online until he published the book *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter Into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity*. The release of this work sparked controversy and made him the target of concerted attacks on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms. This is how Ahern describes it:

> The vitriolic, uncharitable, and downright mean comments are shocking, embarrassing, and unbecoming for anyone who claims a Catholic faith that values communion, love, reconciliation, dialogue, and human dignity. ("This is how all will know that you are my

[51]Francis, *"The Truth Will Set You Free" (Jn. 8:32): Fake News and Journalism for Peace* [message for World Communications Day 2018] (January 24, 2018). Available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20180124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html (accessed January 25, 2018).

> disciples, if you have love for one another"—John 13:35.) I would be deeply embarrassed for my students to see the way the so-called "Catholic Twitter" has evolved over recent months with its distasteful memes, name-calling, fake Twitter accounts, and twisting of words. Indeed, it is not surprising that many of the comments come from Twitter accounts hiding behind the safety of anonymity.[52]

Faggiolo says that

> this sort of vitriol is profoundly changing the communion of the Catholic Church, not just in its ethos, but also in the way it functions. It signals a new kind of censorship that uses verbal violence to intimidate individual Catholics, as well as institutions within the Church—institutions that exist (also) to protect the rights of Catholics.[53]

Not only is the case of Fr. Martin an extreme instance of cyber bullying, it is also a brutal form of repression which hinders dialogue, precludes reconciliation, and damages communion. As Bruni commented, "the vitriol to which he has been subjected is breathtaking, a reminder not just of how much homophobia is still out there but also of how presumptuous, overwrought, cruel and destructive discourse in this digital age can be."[54] In fact, even the present Pope himself has been the subject of many such online attacks coming from those who disagree with him. Indeed, Ahern even went so far as to remark that the "scariest place in the Church in 2018" is none other than Catholic Twitter.

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[52]K. Ahern, "A Failure in Public Theology: The Non-Defense of James Martin, SJ," *Daily Theology* (February 4, 2018). Available at https://dailytheology.org/2018/02/04/a-failure-in-public-theology-the-non-defense-of-james-martin-sj/ (accessed February 15, 2018).

[53]M. Faggioli, "Catholic Cyber-Militias and the New Censorship," *La Croix* (December 29, 2017). Available at https://international.la-croix.com/news/catholic-cyber-militias-and-the-new-censorship/5923 (accessed February 15, 2018).

[54]F. Bruni, "The Scariest Catholic in America," *The New York Times* (February 3, 2018). Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/03/opinion/sunday/scariest-catholic-james-martin.html (accessed February 15, 2018).

The problem, however, lies not only with the so-called "Catholic alt-right," a term which is itself divisive. As Thompson points out, both parties take sides absolutely and balkanize the other, locking themselves in the kind of "echo chamber" which we have described earlier and thereby rendering themselves unable to engage with differing opinions. "On hot-button issues, conservatives retweet only conservatives and liberals only liberals."[55] Toxic hate speech, when made into an issue in itself, becomes a convenient scapegoat for the "Catholic alt-left" to avoid answering questions of doctrine, worship, and morals from the other side which are not always impertinent or invalid. In this way, it becomes all the more difficult to begin the dialogue that should have taken place between the two sides.

The matrix of the Internet as an instrument of violence and war, as original as its matrix for connecting people, thus continues to manifest itself. Sadly, though, such high-speed and menacing digital fundamentalism is not confined only to Catholics or the religious sphere. There is concern, for instance, over the practice of what has been termed *e-jihad*, which can range from spreading jihadist propagandas and campaigns online and launching cyber attacks by means such as hacking and cracking to using the Internet to organize terrorist operations.[56] We also have the rise of online trolls, now known as "Internet Hindus," who rally under the banner of *Hindutva* and attack websites which they deem to be offensive to Hindu religion and culture. Here in the Philippines, the war being waged online by the *Dutertards* and *Delawans*—as they call each other—is not only worsening but also beginning to overflow offline.

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[55]D. Thompson, "How Online Propaganda is Tearing the Church Apart," *Catholic Herald* (October 5, 2017). Available at http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/issues/october-6th-2017/how-online-propaganda-is-tearing-the-church-apart/ (accessed February 15, 2018).

[56]See G. Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London: Pluto Press, 2003).

Fides Quarens Nexus?

While the Internet from its inception was a means not only of conveying information but also of connecting people, it was, at the same time, an instrument originally meant to be used for war. This ambivalent if not paradoxical character of digital technology vis-à-vis communion persists until now and has been magnified even more by the interactive capabilities afforded by Web 2.0, which gave birth to what we now know as "social media" and are being further enhanced by ongoing developments in Web 3.0 and onwards.

Owing to its inherent social nature and power for connectivity from the very beginning, the digital world on the one hand carries so much potential for bringing people together. Indeed, the network of networks has continued to evolve rapidly from being simply a nexus to becoming a locus for human communion—"a network not of wires but of people."[57] On the other hand, though, the same Web can also be a nexus and locus of division, conflict, and violence when placed in the wrong hands and exploited for the wrong ends, a grim and stubborn reminder of its dark roots as an instrument of war. The Biblical image of a two-edged sword that cuts both ways may be an appropriate metaphor to describe the Internet and social media in relation to communion. Where should the Church situate herself then in relation to digital technology?

Invoking the image of the ancient marketplace where the Greeks and Romans used to congregate, John Paul II called the Internet the "Neo Areopagus"[58] where the people of today converge. He also described it as "the new Forum" where we find the best and worst

[57]Francis, *Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter* [message for the 48th World Communications Day] (January 24, 2014). Available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20140124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html.

[58]John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* 37.

of humanity.[59] As such, we have no choice but to take advantage of this vast missionary frontier that is filled with so much promise and fraught with so much danger. The challenge for us is to harness the potential of the Internet so it becomes a bridge and not a barrier to a culture of communion. Francis observes that

> if a choice has to be made between a bruised Church which goes out to the streets and a Church suffering from self-absorption, I certainly prefer the first. Those "streets" are the world where people live and where they can be reached, both effectively and affectively. The digital highway is one of them, a street teeming with people who are often hurting, men and women looking for salvation or hope. By means of the Internet, the Christian message can reach "to the ends of the earth" (*Acts* 1:8). Keeping the doors of our churches open also means keeping them open in the digital environment so that people, whatever their situation in life, can enter, and so that the Gospel can go out to reach everyone.[60]

On the fourth day of the aforementioned Theology Week at the University of Santo Tomas, Fr. Mercado asked Fr. Aureada a very interesting question. He began by recalling the three distinct notions of faith, facets of one reality that are all important but which have taken turns preoccupying theology in various historical periods: *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding), *fides quaerens iustitiam socialem* (faith seeking social justice), and *fides quaerens adorationem* (faith seeking adoration). He then mused about what notion of faith might preoccupy our generation—might it be *fides quaerens nexus* or faith seeking connection?

Here Fr. Mercado raises an important point about connectivity being perhaps the most distinctive trademark of this period in history, an important prompt for theologians in reading the "signs of the times" and discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit. Yet connectivity alone

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[59]John Paul II, *Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel* [message for the 36th World Communications Day] (January 24, 2002), 2. Available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20020122_world-communications-day.html.

[60]Francis, *Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter.*

should be considered not as a goal in itself but only as a means for faith to pursue something deeper and more essential. Taking the cue once again from the Pope, it "is not enough to be passersby on the digital highways, simply 'connected'; connections need to grow into true encounters." *Nexus quaerens communionem. Fides quaerens communionem.*

Communion here is more than just a passing fad or preoccupation, more than merely one of the facets of faith. It belongs to the very matrix of our Trinitarian God who is a communion of persons and to our matrix as human beings created in God's image. With its tremendous capacity for connectivity, digital technology as seen from this perspective may thus be one of the most important means the Lord has given us in the service of this communion if we will not allow it to be corrupted by the enemy who loves to sow tares among the wheat.

Landas 32:2 (2018) 61–74

A CRITIQUE OF GENDER IDEOLOGY

James McTavish, F.M.V.D.

It is common nowadays to meet young people who are confused about their gender identity. To feel like the other gender is very much in fashion; it is the new trending topic. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the Gender Identity Development Service reported that it received 1,986 referrals of children in 2016/2017, up from 94 referrals in 2009/2010,[1] making for a relative increase of 2,000%. In Canada, a parent was allowed to register her/his child's sex as "U" (probably for unspecified) so that the child will have the freedom to choose *its* own gender later on.[2] And in the Philippines, 10% of males aged 18–25 years old now identify with the opposite gender.[3] How are we to react to this? How are we to discern the "signs of the times" (see Mt. 16:3) here?

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[1]"GIDS Referrals Figures for 2016/17," Gender Identity Development Service. Available at http://gids.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/content_uploads/referral-figures-2016-17.pdf.

[2]"Canadian baby 'first without gender designation' on health card," *BBC News* (July 3, 2017). Available at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40480386.

[3]E. Valles, *Project Courage Topline Research Results* (Manila: 2018).

Confusion as a Relatively Recent Phenomenon

Gender identity confusion on this scale is a relatively recent phenomenon. Dr. Edward Furton, Director for Publications at the influential National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, comments: "The age in which we live contributes to the confusion. The claim that sexual identity is imposed on us by society—and therefore is malleable and subject to choice—is one of the great delusions of our time."[4] The Pontifical Council for the Family explains:

> Starting from the decade between 1960–1970, some theories … hold [sic] not only that generic sexual identity ("gender") is the product of an interaction between the community and the individual, but that this generic identity is independent from personal sexual identity: i.e., that masculine and feminine genders in society are the exclusive product of social factors, with no relation to any truth about the sexual dimension of the person. In this way, any sexual attitude can be justified, including homosexuality, and it is society that ought to change in order to include other genders, together with male and female, in its way of shaping social life.[5]

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church also notes that,

> faced with theories that consider gender identity as merely the cultural and social product of the interaction between the community and the individual, independent of personal sexual identity without any reference to the true meaning of sexuality, the Church does not tire of repeating her teaching: "Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept [their] sexual identity."[6]

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[4]E. Furton, "Confusion about Sex and Gender," *Ethics and Medics* 40:2 (2015): 3.

[5]Pontifical Council for the Family, *Family, Marriage and "De Facto" Unions* (Vatican City: 2000), 8. Available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_20001109_de-facto-unions_en.html.

[6]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004), 224.

In a nutshell, the issue that developed was the attempt to dissociate sex (as male or female) from gender (the outward expression of our sexuality) in radical fashion. To add to the linguistic confusion even further, sex is now labeled as "assigned gender" as it is only allegedly *assigned* at birth (an idea which sort of ignores all the biological occurrences since conception). It is now commonplace to be a male (sex = "assigned gender") but feel like a female (gender expression = "experienced or expressed gender"). The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith explains the situation that has arisen: "In this perspective [of gender ideology], physical difference, termed *sex*, is minimized, while the purely cultural element, termed *gender*, is emphasized to the maximum and held to be primary."[7]

Gender Dysphoria

Psychiatrists use the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (abbreviated as DSM) to classify mental disorders. People who feel that they were born into the wrong body are listed under "gender identity disorder" in DSM 4 (first published in 1994). Things changed with DSM 5, published in 2013, which defines gender dysphoria as

> the distress that may accompany the incongruence between one's experienced or expressed gender and one's assigned gender. Although not all individuals will experience distress as a result of such incongruence, many are distressed if the desired physical interventions by means of hormones and/or surgery are not available.[8]

The diagnosis of gender dysphoria in adolescents and adults as such involves a difference between one's experienced/expressed gender and

[7]Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World" (Rome: 2004), n. 2.

[8]American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* 5th ed. (Arlington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013), 451. Hereafter referred to as DSM-5.

assigned gender as well as significant distress or problems functioning.[9] It is regarded as dysfunctional if it lasts for at least six months and is determined by at least two of the following:

- a marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics;[10]
- a strong desire to be rid of one's primary and/or secondary sex characteristics;
- a strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender;
- a strong desire to be of the other gender;
- a strong desire to be treated as the other gender; and
- a strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender.

The diagnosis of gender dysphoria in children, according to DSM 5, involves at least six of the following along with an associated significant distress or impairment in function, with all these lasting for at least six months:

- a strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender;
- a strong preference for wearing clothes typical of the opposite gender;

[9]American Psychiatric Association, "What Is Gender Dysphoria?" Available at https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gender-dysphoria/what-is-gender-dysphoria.

[10]Primary sexual characteristics are present from birth (such as testes and penis in the male and vagina, uterus, and ovaries in the female). Secondary sexual characteristics emerge at puberty (such as increased muscular mass, deepening of the voice, and facial hair in males and enlargement of breasts in females).

- a strong preference for cross-gender roles in make-believe play or fantasy play;
- a strong preference for the toys, games, or activities stereotypically used or engaged in by the other gender;
- a strong preference for playmates of the other gender;
- a strong rejection of toys, games, and activities typical of one's assigned gender;
- a strong dislike of one's sexual anatomy; and
- a strong desire for the physical sex characteristics that match one's experienced gender.

There is a significant change then between DSM 4 (where we find "gender identity disorder") and DSM 5 (where it is now called "gender dysphoria"). Dr. Paul Hruz, an associate professor at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, describes what happened:

> With the publication of the fifth edition of this manual (DSM-5) in 2013, the diagnosis of "gender identity disorder" transitioned to "gender dysphoria," with the assertion that gender-sex discordance is a normal manifestation of human diversity. Treatment aims accordingly shifted to the patient's level of "dis-ease," or negative feelings, about the appearance of his or her body. Turning the understanding of the relationship between wellness and disease on its head, the mind is now considered healthy and the body diseased. In this light, the simplest solution to the problem is to alter the body to conform to mental belief.[11]

Dr. Edward Furton comments:

> Although the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the standard source for describing mental disease, continues to list this condition as a psychological dysfunction, it is no longer explained as a failure to identify with one's given sex, but rather as a feeling of incongruence between physical sex and "gender identity." The claim

[11]P. Hruz, "The Use of Cross-Sex Steroids in the Treatment of Gender Dysphoria," *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 17:4 (2017): 661–671, here at 664.

> that one's psychological idea of sexual self does not match one's physical body has been given the name "gender dysphoria."[12]

Such growing confusion among the youth about their gender identity is due largely to the widespread diffusion of gender ideology, of which Pope Francis himself is a strong critic. It is to his teaching that we now turn.

Pope Francis: A Vocal Critic of Gender Ideology

When Francis visited the Philippines in 2015, he said, "Let us be on guard against colonization by new ideologies. There are forms of ideological colonization which are out to destroy the family."[13] He did not elaborate further, yet these words came as a strong warning seeing that the Philippines had already experienced over 400 years of harsh and unjust colonization. In a later address to the Polish bishops, the Pope explained his concern:

> In Europe, America, Latin America, Africa, and in some countries of Asia, there are genuine forms of ideological colonization taking place. And one of these—I will call it clearly by its name—is [the ideology of] "gender." Today children—children!—are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex. Why are they teaching this? Because the books are provided by the persons and institutions that give you money. These forms of ideological colonization are also supported by influential countries. And this [is] terrible![14]

Francis also referred to the problem in *Amoris Laetitia:*

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[12]See Furton, "Confusion about Sex and Gender," 3.

[13]Francis, Address of His Holiness Pope Francis at the Meeting with Families (Manila, Philippines: January 16, 2015). Available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150116_srilanka-filippine-incontro-famiglie.html.

[14]Francis, Address of His Holiness Pope Francis at the Meeting with the Polish Bishops (Kraków, Poland: July 27, 2016). Available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/july/documents/papa-francesco_20160727_polonia-vescovi.html.

> Yet another challenge is posed by the various forms of an ideology of gender that "denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time." It is a source of concern that some ideologies of this sort, which seek to respond to what are at times understandable aspirations, manage to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised. It needs to be emphasized that "biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated."[15]

The way we deal with our bodies as created entities is a living reflection of how we relate to our Creator. Francis writes in *Laudato Si'*, his encyclical on care for creation, that

> it is enough to recognize that our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment.[16]

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[15]Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (March 19, 2016), 56. Available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf.

[16]Francis, *Laudato Si'* (May 24, 2015), 155. Available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

Our bodies are created and are "temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). We cannot just do whatever we wish with them. That is why St. Paul exhorts as such: "Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18).

Effects of Ideological Colonization

The new colonization through gender ideology is easily seen in countries like the Philippines. In some "Flowers of May" processions in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for instance, a large number of boys can be seen dressed up as "girls." Some statistics would be helpful indeed, but there is a serious shortage of research and data here. The only study I have seen was work done for a master's thesis by a member of Courage International. He surveyed 357 young people in Manila (aged 18–25 years old) and found that 10% of males and 4% of females identified themselves with the opposite gender and, hence, are "dysphoric." This is obviously not a strict psychological diagnosis (which is hard to come by in the Philippines as there are so few psychiatrists trained in this specific area and most of the population cannot afford their rates), yet these figures are astonishingly high nevertheless considering that the upper estimate for the prevalence of transgender people in the U.S. population is only 0.4%.[17] This means that for every transgender person in the United States there are 15 youths in the Philippines who identify with the opposite gender. Yet the U.S. (along with other countries) is partly responsible for exporting distorted gender views to other nations, and here we can see the drastic consequences of such.

[17]In DSM-5, birth rates of gender dysphoria are cited as ranging from 0.005% to 0.014% for males and from 0.002% to 0.003% for females (see crashchaoscats, "DSM-V Gender Dysphoria." Available at https://crashchaoscats.wordpress.com/2014/04/10/dsm-v-gender-dysphoria/). The prevalence rate in adults is different.

Severing Gender from Sex

Severing gender from sex is akin to cutting the boat "free" from its anchor. Surely one recognizes that it is not prudent to give *carte blanche* to sexual identity expression in the youth—is such really a step toward freedom or is it not rather pushing the youth into slavery? Gender ideology tends to promote the idea that one can choose one's gender and hence one's sexual orientation and behavior thereafter. The grave concern in not calling out its dangers as such is that many young people who are often exploring their sexual identity may be swept along by it. In the aforementioned Courage survey, 9% of males in Manila expressed same sex attraction, a rate which is much higher than that of the U.S. and U.K. (approximately 3%), while 16% of the respondents (both male and female combined) expressed bisexuality.

Enshrined in Laws

There are moves to enshrine support for gender confusion in law, such as the so-called "Anti-Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Discrimination Act" which bluntly states that sexual orientation

> refers to the direction of emotional, sexual attraction, or conduct towards people of the same sex (homosexual orientation) or towards people of both sexes (bisexual orientation), or towards people of the opposite sex (heterosexual orientation) or to the absence of sexual attraction (asexual orientation).…[18]

The bill and its proponents are rather blasé about opening the Pandora's box of unbridled sexual expression.

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[18]House of Representatives, *SOGIE Equality Act*, House Bill No. 4982 (September 20, 2017), sec. 3.i. Available at http://www.congress.gov.ph/legisdocs/third_17/HBT4982.pdf.

One of the many consequences of such a *laissez faire* attitude to sexual behavior is the on-going HIV[19] (and AIDS[20]) epidemic in the Philippines. Lawmakers would be shocked to discover that of the 33 new cases of HIV diagnosed every day, 29 of these occur with males having sex with other males, with around one third of them being 15–24 years old.[21] The last thing young people need, therefore, are confusing messages about sexual identity and expression! Those proposing such laws and spreading confusion have "HIV infected blood on their hands."

Feelings: The New Golden Calf

I also find it somewhat surprising when the medical and psychiatric professions no longer seem to question the following ideology (or pseudo-science): that feelings alone can override, in a way that is unquestionable, hard biological data such as when an individual who is genetically, anatomically, physically, and physiologically male announces that he feels like a woman (or vice versa). Feelings are made the equivalent of a modern-day golden calf that is to be idolized:

> With that, the Lord said to Moses … "They have soon turned aside from the way I pointed out to them, making for themselves a molten calf and worshiping it, sacrificing to it and crying out, 'This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!' I see how stiff-necked [these] people are," continued the LORD to Moses. (Ex. 32:7–9)

[19]HIV as we know is an abbreviation for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus which is a type of virus called a retrovirus. There is no cure (at the time of this writing) once a person is infected. HIV is the virus that can eventually cause AIDS.

[20]AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome and is the potential result of HIV infection acquired through various modes of transmission. The immune system of the infected person becomes deficient (immunodeficiency) and weak, giving rise to a plethora of diseases (syndrome).

[21]Department of Health-Epidemiology Bureau, *HIV/AIDS & ART Registry of the Philippines* (June 2018). See www.aidsdatahub.org/sites/default/files/publication/EB_HIV_June_AIDSreg2018.pdf.

Feelings *are* important, and they do enter into the moral judgment of a person, yet a human being is not just a big bag of feelings.

Sex Change

Some may propose a "sex change" as one potential means of solving the tension of actual vs. felt gender identity. Yet proponents of sex change therapy might not be so enthusiastic if they were more aware of the actual steps involved. The process depends on the age of the person undergoing it; in its most radical form, a pre-pubertal child is given very powerful puberty-suppressing drugs followed by sex hormones and later on by mutilating surgery.[22] This is what sex change surgery, more often known technically as "sex reassignment surgery" (SRS), is—a form of mutilation.[23] It is one of the rare instances when a surgeon will operate and remove perfectly normal and functioning tissue. In fact, the title "sex change" is a misnomer as it is biologically impossible to change one's sex. As the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia clearly underlines, we

> are either male or female persons, and nothing can change that. A person can mutilate his or her genitals, but cannot change his or her sex. Changing one's sex is fundamentally impossible; these procedures are fundamentally acts of mutilation.[24]

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[22]After thoroughly reviewing the available evidence, Hruz et al. conclude that this approach is "experimental" and not prudent. See P. Hruz, L. Mayer, & P. McHugh, "Growing Pains: Problems with Puberty Suppression in Treating Gender Dysphoria," *The New Atlantis* (Spring 2017). Available at https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/growing-pains.

[23]For a more detailed discussion as to whether or not sex reassignment surgery involves mutilation, see D. Jones, "Gender Reassignment Surgery: A Catholic Bioethical Analysis," *Theological Studies* 79:2 (2018): 314–338.

[24]National Catholic Bioethics Center, "FAQ on Gender Identity Disorder and 'Sex Change' Operations." Available at https://www.ncbcenter.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions/gender-identity-disorder-and-sex-change-operations/.

The patient thus remains male or female; all that can be construed or constructed is a poor cosmetic and external imitation of a woman or man.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* understands such mutilations to be immoral: "Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended amputations, mutilations, and sterilizations performed on innocent persons are against the moral law."[25] In the same light, Dr. Paul McHugh, who served as psychiatrist-in-chief at the Johns Hopkins Hospital for more than two decades and was one of the first to raise concerns about transgender approaches that rely on hormones and surgeries, concluded that "to provide a surgical alteration to the body of these unfortunate people was to collaborate with a mental disorder rather than to treat it."[26]

Summary Points

We may thus summarize with some practical points as follows:

1. Our sexuality—to be male or female—is a great gift. Young people need to learn how to express their sexuality in the best way through healthy and life-giving means.

2. The ideology of gender is a great source of confusion for young people today. It does them a disservice by cutting apart the intrinsic connection between their biological sex and its outward expression in their gender. It is a view and ideology that can produce fragmentation in the human person.

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[25] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), 2297. Available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.

[26] T. Pacholczyk, "Changing My Body to 'Match' My 'Identity'?" *Making Sense of Bioethics* (July 2015). Available at https://www.ncbcenter.org/files/5714/6902/2319/MSOB121_Changing_My_Body_To_Match_My_Identity.pdf.

3. The ability to choose one's gender often gives free rein to any sexual behavior whatsoever. This brings catastrophic consequences as can be seen with the HIV epidemic in the Philippines, which is driven largely by males having sex with other males.

4. The Catholic vision is a unitive one in that our gender is connected to our biological sex. Our bodies were created by God and we should love and respect them in our being male and female.

5. Young people should live with purity of heart and not fall into unbridled curiosity in the area of sexual behavior.

6. We also believe that young people have a duty and a mission not only to spread the truth about human sexuality by their word and good example but also to counteract the confusion caused by gender ideology. By being good examples, they can help prevent many other youths from being confused about these issues.

Conclusion

While more research into the exact nature of clinical gender dysphoria is still needed, we can already see that the vast majority of gender-confused young people, especially in countries like the Philippines, need clearer guidance in the meantime to enable them to traverse the choppy ocean of sexual maturation during their adolescent years. The real danger is that young people, impressionable as they are, are being given a confusing message about gender and sexuality. They are being bombarded with confusing messages that put their healthy growth in correct sexual identity at risk of being shipwrecked. Indeed, the aggressive marketing and promotion of gender identity confusion is a "sign of the times" (Mt. 16:3), and there is an overwhelming pressure to conform to this gender ideology for fear of being accused of "hate speech" and of being labelled as "transphobic" or "homophobic."

We need to ensure, then, that we do not get swept along in the hype amid all the celebrations of gender diversity. Just like the little boy in Hans Christian Andersen's tale "The Emperor's New Clothes," the boy who did not just go along with the celebratory flow and cheering of the crowd but was able to point out the truth that the Emperor did not have the new clothes on, that he was actually naked, we must point out the deception propagated and generated by gender ideology.

In uncovering both the reality and concomitant confusion of gender ideology, we must not only guide the youth but also reassure parents. We feel sorry for those who are now told, for example, that they must support the feeling of their young boy who feels like he is a girl. A child should not be allowed to put on a cape and jump out the window just because he feels like Superman.

In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, all were asleep (see Mt. 25:1–13) and would have stayed that way but for an unknown and unnamed character in the Gospel—the voice crying out at midnight (Mt. 25:6). Our baptism calls us to exercise the prophetic task and to be that voice that is crying out when all seem to be sleeping. As such, the growing trend of gender dysphoria should not be a cause for euphoria but rather a cause for concern; indeed, the fad surrounding gender identity and the increasing diffusion of gender ideology are leading many young and impressionable people to sexual identity confusion. We should thus resist attempts that force us to jump onto this ideological bandwagon; we should "stay awake" (Mt. 25:13) and be vigilant as the Lord asks of us.

Landas 32:2 (2018) 75–90

CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Johnny C. Go, S.J.

Being a leader is tough—the best ones I know consider it a burden more than an honor, a responsibility more than a promotion, a sacrifice more than a perk. Leaders of Catholic schools, in particular, find themselves today in situations of increasing complexity and vulnerability. More and more scholars and practitioners are thus linking leadership to spirituality precisely because of this, perhaps, a connection that was, quite frankly, unimaginable a few decades ago.

This multi-disciplinary approach to leadership—one that includes not only the disciplines of psychology and sociology but also spirituality in particular—has led to deeper investigations into the motivation, values, and behaviors of both leader and follower.[1] Based on my own

[1]See, for example, M. Benefiel & B. Lee, *The Soul of Higher Education: Contemplative Pedagogy, Research and Institutional Life for the Twenty-first Century* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2019); R. Burke, "Leadership and Spirituality," *Foresight* 8:6 (2006): 14–25; L. Fry & Y. Altman, *Spiritual Leadership in Action* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2013); M. Kriger & B. Hanson, "A Value-Based Paradigm for Creating Truly Healthy Organizations," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 12:4 (1999): 302–317; F. Markow & K. Klenke, "The Effects of Personal Meaning and Calling on Organizational Commitment: An Empirical Investigation of Spiritual Leadership," *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 13:1 (2005): 8–27; Y. Meng, "Spiritual Leadership

practice and the experiences of those I have worked with, I have come to believe that spirituality serves as a valuable source for the courage and clear thinking so essential to the challenging task of leadership today.

Walking on Water: Courage in the Midst of Vulnerability

> And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." (Matt. 14:28–30)

Simon Peter, when one thinks about it, was the candidate least likely to be the leader of the apostles. Always the first to speak, he often ended up with the proverbial foot in the mouth. He rarely thought before he jumped. Indeed, we see this literally in the episode where the disciples were out at sea and witnessed Jesus walking on water. Not content to wait for Jesus to reach their boat, Simon volunteered to meet him halfway, only to be overwhelmed eventually by fear when he realized what he had gotten himself into.

Despite his impulsiveness, however, he was Jesus's choice to be the leader. I suspect it was because Jesus recognized something valuable underneath—namely, Peter's willingness and courage to be vulnerable. Leaders today need the courage to be vulnerable more than ever because they inevitably put themselves on the line, whether they like it or not.

The Viral Video

On the last day of class at an exclusive all-boys' high school, a video clip of a bullying incident was posted online and immediately

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at the Workplace: Perspectives and Theories," *Biomedical Reports* 5:4 (2016): 408–412; and L. Reave, "Spiritual Values and Practices Related to Leadership Effectiveness," *The Leadership Quarterly* 16:5 (2005): 655–687.

went viral. It showed a teenage boy taunting a classmate in school and daring him to a fight. When the latter refused, he was punched several times until his nose bled. Even more disturbing, however, was the presence of bystanders who did nothing, with one of them even documenting the incident on video.

The clip ignited a feeding frenzy among the social media mob that lasted for almost a month. The bully was bashed online (never mind, as some correctly pointed out in their comments, that he was only a minor) as were his parents; one netizen even challenged the boy's father to a fistfight. The school and its newly appointed principal, Mr. Thomas Santos,[2] were, needless to say, also bashed.

Immediately after the video broke out, Mr. Santos released a memo with the intention of "claiming the narrative." It was a statement that risked fanning the flames, but for him it was a risk that was unquestionably worth taking. Mr. Santos wanted to warn the community about the video, assure its members that a proper investigation would be conducted, and, most importantly, request the public to desist from sharing the video for the sake of the students involved. Yet hundreds of online critics believed they knew better: they condemned the school, nitpicked on the principal's memo, and shared the video anyway.

When asked how he dealt with the tremendous pressure of those days, the principal had this to say:

> I think what helped me most was my effort to maintain a safe emotional distance throughout the experience, but it also meant knowing when to be emotionally involved. I remember advising my colleagues who found themselves in the social spotlight that there are times when we need to be like the thick-skinned government officials who care little about public opinion. There are times, however, when we need to put ourselves in the shoes of others in order to better understand them. It was not easy deciding when it was time to detach and when it was necessary to be involved. Here's where prayer helped a lot.

[2]Not his real name.

Mr. Santos turned to spirituality for courage and clear thinking in such a vulnerable situation, at a time of personal vulnerability and chaos.

An Online Arena of Critics

In his 1910 speech at the Sorbonne, Theodore Roosevelt famously reminded his listeners that "it is not the critics who matter … but the man in the arena."[3] He was criticizing those who had "a cynical habit of thought and speech, a readiness to criticize work which the critic himself never tries to perform." Now, thanks to social media, the critics booing from the bleachers today have multiplied a thousand-fold. It is a scary thing indeed—leaders find themselves at present on center stage with a virtually boundless arena of online detractors, making the landscape where we practice our leadership particularly difficult to navigate and rendering leaders particularly vulnerable.

Mr. Santos thus told his colleagues, "What happened to us may well be the shape of things to come in the future." Yet the future is already here. Every decision that leaders make these days—whether they like it or not, whether they choose to do so or not—can possibly be thrust into the social media spotlight.

In his book *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*, Jon Ronson investigates how victims of social media bashing not only lost their reputations and jobs but also barely survived the traumas they were subjected to.[4] What is remarkable about this new phenomenon of online public shaming is that it is committed not just by professional trolls but also by ordinary folks like ourselves. People have developed a tendency, because of social media, to weigh in on every sort of matter, with their apparent anonymity online encouraging them to do so. It is a small

[3]T. Roosevelt, *Citizenship in a Republic*, speech delivered on April 23, 1910 (Paris: Sorbonne University).

[4]J. Ronson, *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2016).

surprise, then, that the most frequently re-tweeted emotion is anger.[5] The result is an unforgiving "call-out" culture; indeed, one writer even described outrage as the "sweet spot in the collective psyche."[6] Leaders find their decisions subjected to the most public—and often most cruel—of scrutinies almost overnight.

Leadership these days is risky business it seems, inevitably requiring the occasional exercise in vulnerability. The best leaders need to be willing—and courageous—enough to be vulnerable, to walk, as it were, on stormy waters. It is when we find ourselves in these situations that it helps to do a Simon Peter: to turn to spirituality for the courage and direction we need.

Crossing a Different River: Clear Thinking Amidst Uncertainty

> Ever-newer waters flow on those who step into the same rivers.
> – Heraclitus (B12)

More popularly translated as "You cannot step into the same river twice," this quote about the constancy of change in the world and metaphor of the ever-changing river captures an important reality about leadership. Each situation that a leader faces is novel and unique; the rivers that we cross are inevitably Heraclitean.

In my youth, I often wished that I had access to some kind of blueprint on how to make sound decisions. I believed then that all I needed was the expertise to enable me to make all the right choices. I soon learned, however, that no amount of technical knowledge or skill that could possibly be acquired in any training would be enough to prepare leaders for the decisions they have to make.

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[5]J. Berger & K. Milkman, "What Makes Online Content Viral?" *Journal of Marketing Research* 49:2 (2012): 192–205.

[6]S. Scibona, "The Industrial Revolution of Shame," *The New York Times* (March 9, 2019). Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/09/opinion/sunday/internet-shaming.html.

"I'm afraid you did, Father."

I encountered a unique and truly unexpected incident at the very first graduation ceremony that I attended as head of school. We had invited one of our own to give the commencement address: an alumnus who was considered one of the youngest and most promising elected public servants in the country at the time. He impressed us as someone who exemplified everything that we wanted our graduates to be: smart, articulate, and courteous.

When it was his turn to deliver his message to the graduates, we all leaned forward in anticipation—the graduating class, their parents, and the teachers (including some for whom the speaker was a former student). Nothing could have prepared us for the speech—his first sentence included an expletive, a four-letter word that I thought—and wished—I had misheard. Seated beside me on stage was an elderly man, the chairman of the school's board of trustees; I leaned over to him, wide-eyed and open-jawed, and whispered incredulously, "Did I just hear?…" "I'm afraid you did, Father," replied the wise man to me in the calmest of tones, without even waiting for me to finish.

The speech, unfortunately, included more than just that one word. During its entirety, moreover, the phone in my pocket vibrated indignantly, and I knew whom the messages were from—my seat onstage afforded me the view of outraged faces of parents bristling behind their sons and typing furiously into their phones. As it turned out, all the young man intended was to connect more effectively with his young audience, and so he thought—quite wrongly—that he should resort to using such colorful language. The well-intentioned speaker, however, miscalculated; unfortunately, yet to their credit, the graduating class winced at the words they considered inappropriate.

Now, after over a decade of experience in school administration, I still know that nothing could have prepared me for that incident. There simply exists no available template for handling such unpredictable—and, in this case, unimaginable—situations. Since we as leaders deal with people, the scenarios we face are rarely black-and-white. They get predictably complex and messy; indeed, each situation remains

unique and novel even though it appears to be like others previously encountered. Every situation that a leader faces is an "indeterminate zone of practice," one characterized by complexity, uncertainty, and conflict.[7]

The Intrinsic Complexity of Problem-Solving

In their book *Leadership on the Line*, Heifetz and Linsky distinguish what they call adaptive problems from merely technical concerns and caution us against the mistake that leaders commit most often—resorting exclusively to technical solutions to address adaptive problems.[8]

Unlike their technical counterparts, adaptive problems do not have single, self-evident, or verifiable solutions given that they involve people, mindsets, and behaviors. It is never the same river when it comes to them, just as it is never the same case when it comes to leadership. You never get to say, "Been there, done that"; as the psychologist Erik Erikson puts it, "Every case is a universe of one." Theoretical and technical expertise is rarely adequate, therefore, precisely because leadership is leadership of *people*. One needs to develop the aptitude for dealing with ambiguity, not to mention the more fundamental disposition of feeling comfortable with it in the first place. Leadership involves embracing uncertainty and exercising clear thinking in the midst of uncertainty.

There is an informal tradition that emerged among the high school seniors of the school that I used to head, one that grew organically into a rite of passage for our graduating students. At the last hour of the school fair, their final major student project before graduation, the seniors would gather spontaneously in the field and, with music blaring, celebrate together by running as a batch.

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[7]D. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

[8]R. Heifetz & M. Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002).

As the school fair approached closing time during one particular year, however, the senior class that gathered in the football field as expected suddenly broke into a spontaneous dance. They jumped around as music blared, and soon found themselves forming a human train that began snaking through the fair grounds. Unfortunately, one thing led to another and their exuberance got the better of them: one student started tossing things around; another, caught up in the moment, began to smash things; and others followed. The adults watched in amusement at first and then—as the vandalism escalated—in increasing horror.

When it was all over, a number of booths had been damaged and the school found itself with a clear case of vandalism involving unidentified culprits. An investigation was conducted, yet, no matter how thorough it was, the most important question remained unanswered: who actually did it? Predictably enough, none of the seniors was willing to talk. The school was left with two options, and both were *impossible:* either sanction the whole batch (too harsh and unjust because it would include many of those who were innocent) or simply turn a blind eye to the incident (equally unacceptable due to the scale of the vandalism involved).

Someone on our leadership team then suggested to cancel the upcoming senior graduation ball as a consequence of the incident. It seemed like the perfect solution—no one would be unjustly sanctioned and the school would be able to make a strong statement condemning the violence. With the decision left to me as head of school, there was overwhelming pressure to bite the bullet and cancel the ball—the school *needed* to assert its authority and send an important message to the entire community that the seniors' behavior during the fair was unacceptable. The seniors themselves, as expected, were stunned when they heard of the possible cancellation. Yet the technical solution was self-evident: teach the students a lesson for insisting on a graduation ritual by depriving them of another. An eye for an eye.

What concerned me, however, was whether or not we should allow the seniors to leave the school with the resentment—perhaps even bitterness—that such a decision would surely breed. Would the

school's reassertion of its authority be worth the reaction, one that may leave the students even less likely to learn from their mistakes? If the students leave their alma mater with resentment, what would happen to the values we tried to teach them and hoped that they would live out, values that included tolerance and forgiveness?

As is the case with the most difficult decisions that leaders have to make, this situation entailed not a simple choice between what is self-evidently right or wrong but a carefully discerned decision between two choices that both appeared to be right. In situations like these, leaders are faced with an opportunity to define both the kind of leadership they choose to wield as well as the kind of leader they choose to be.

Power or Popularity

Leaders need self-knowledge. They must be sufficiently aware of their own needs that might unwittingly shape their decisions. In the particular case mentioned above, two basic human needs came into play: the need to assert control (power) and the need to be affirmed (popularity).

Leaders too often make the mistake of lapsing into either of these two extremes: those who insist on getting their way and those who let others get theirs—in short, those who exercise what I call "lordship" and those who simply lapse into "laidbackship" (Figure 1). The former would have a tendency towards decisiveness at the expense of consultation while the latter would tend towards consultation at the expense of decisiveness.



Figure 1

Either option is appealing for different reasons yet inadequate on its own. A leadership characterized by lordship would tend toward meting out a proper punishment to the students while one marked by laidbackship would be inclined to succumb to pressure from either the students who wanted the ball or the faculty who felt strongly about a

sanction. Effective leadership thus entails careful discernment of how one's needs may create a bias for particular courses of action. This will ensure that decisions are the result of clear thinking rather than of the unconscious and powerful needs of the leader.

Here, then, is where spirituality comes in. While clear thinking demands an awareness of one's self and a brutally honest appraisal of one's most powerful needs, spirituality enables leaders to manage and transcend those needs. It makes possible the clear thinking that is a prerequisite for—although by no means a guarantee of—sound judgment.

Situations like this, moreover, provide leaders with occasions for values clarification. In the aforementioned case, the school needed to choose between two values: that of upholding the school's policies on the one hand, and that of making sure the seniors would be open to learning from this teaching moment on the other. Which of these two should the leader and institution consider as the higher value—or the greater good? This process of decision-making constitutes "defining moments"—opportunities for self-definition on the part of both the leader and the institution. They are moments when we can remind our community and tell the public who we are and what we are about.[9]

After two weeks of discussion and discernment, the school decided to allow the seniors—who for those two weeks worried about the fate of their graduation ball—to continue with the event but not without clarifying, in no uncertain terms, that the decision was being made in a spirit of magnanimity and forgiveness. In short, we chose to respond differently and opted for an adaptive solution to an adaptive problem instead of reacting to the students' mistake and sanctioning them (and even if doing so would have been justified). We chose to define the school not in terms of punishment but in terms of forgiveness, second chances, and magnanimity. Indeed, it can certainly be argued that foregoing any disciplinary action would fail to convey to the students that actions have consequences which need to be faced.

[9]J. Badaracco, *Defining Moments: When Managers Must Choose between Right and Right* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1997).

In our judgment, however, and given our best lights, the students' openness to learn from the experience was of far greater value than any benefit to be had from the imposing of a sanction as spelled out in the handbook.

The students, needless to say, were surprised and relieved when they learned of the school's decision. Some shared how it made them feel greater shame over the mistake they committed yet grateful at the same time for the chance to celebrate their graduation at their ball. We in the leadership team could only hope that they learned from the experience and became better individuals as a result of this decision.

The Spiritual Practice of Leadership

Leadership today entails courage and clarity of thought—the courage to embrace vulnerability and the clarity of thought to make discernment possible. Leaders must dare to walk on water and recognize that they are stepping into a different river with every situation that they face. It is a big task for which technical expertise falls short. Yet to rise to such challenges, leaders can turn to spirituality.

What, in turn, would this spirituality look and sound like, especially in contrast to religion? Here I do not necessarily mean belonging to a particular religious tradition or even believing in God. Rather, I refer to what the poet Yeats calls "soul-making"[10] or, in more contemporary language, self-making. It is the means by which one defines oneself and builds one's interiority and inner resources, equipping oneself thereby to transcend shortcomings and setbacks in the process. For many, this requires belief in a higher power like God or membership in a faith community, yet these two elements, while helpful, are neither necessary nor sufficient.[11]

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[10]J. Keats in H. Rollins, ed., *The Letters of John Keats 1814–1821* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 100–104.

[11]While I as a Catholic priest obviously believe that religion—i.e., believing in God and belonging to a faith community—is crucial to the "soul-making" of spirituality, it is by no means necessary for all.

First Lessons about Leadership

When I was a junior high school student, I missed one important planning session for a high-profile spiritual weekend activity and so was, in my absence and just as predicted, elected to lead it. I consider it my very first experience of *real* leadership because that activity was almost entirely student-led, and I knew that much of the responsibility—and blame—would fall on me.

The terror I felt, along with the spiritual nature of the activity, drove me to resort to prayer. It did not help, moreover, that the leader of the previous year appeared during the activity to express his dissatisfaction over the changes that our new team had instituted. I found myself facing this alumnus and convincing him to let us do our work our way because we believed that ours was a better way to achieve our goal. Indeed, it was not so much about "your way" or "our way" but about accomplishing the objective of the activity.

That experience taught me one of my first and most valuable lessons about leadership—namely, that leadership is not just about the relationship between leader and followers. There is a third—and, I will argue, most important—party in any exercise of leadership: the cause that is larger than both leader and follower, namely, the mission of the organization. In this triangle of leadership, the leader's primary task is to inspire the community to do as the leader is doing: to recognize and serve this higher cause. Only in making sure that the community is focused on the mission is any leader able to exercise leadership effectively (Figure 2).[12]

The spirituality of leadership thus entails, to be precise, a commitment to something beyond leaders themselves, to both the mission and the community that have been entrusted to them. Only

[12]This leadership structure is adapted from the Ignatian learning-teaching framework discussed in J. Go & R. Atienza, *Learning by Refraction: A Practitioner's Guide to 21st-Century Ignatian Pedagogy* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2019).

with such a commitment will the self-transcendence demanded by leadership become possible.

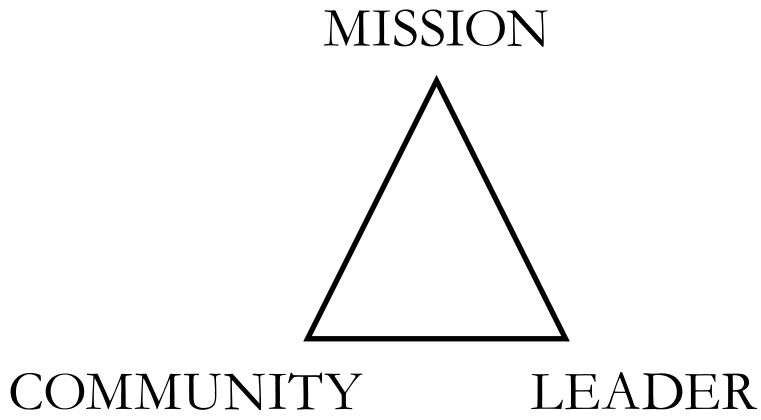


Figure 2

A leader, however, cannot *directly* cause the community to commit to the mission. Only by inspiring the community to do this *indirectly*—by exhibiting a vision and passion for the mission and by building solid personal relationships within the community[13]—can the leader succeed.

Expertise and Enthusiasm

A leader's vision and passion for the mission can be operationally defined by one's *expertise* about the purpose of the organization as well as *enthusiasm* for it. Both ingredients are equally essential for exercising effective leadership.

It is a minimum requirement for leaders to understand the mission of the community which they are leading. They are expected to spend enough time reflecting on the mission so that they have a better

[13]These two elements serendipitously correspond to the two Jesuit values of *magis* (commitment to do more and become better) and *cura personalis* (personal care).

insight into where the community should be going. The last thing a community wants is a leader who does not understand the "why" of the community's existence.

Apart from this expertise about the mission, however, the even more important task of *communicating* this understanding in a manner that inspires and *infects* followers with the leader's enthusiasm is part and parcel of leadership. Indeed, such enthusiasm sometimes outweighs the expertise for mission since the latter can be delegated to others. The leader, however, bears the primary responsibility for leading the community in committing to the mission by modeling this commitment and communicating why it is worthwhile.

Empathy and Empowerment

A leader's relationship with the community ought to be characterized simultaneously by *empathy* for the members and their *empowerment;* ideally the two must go together. A fundamentally positive regard for followers allows leaders to appreciate better the contexts of the individual members of the community and, as a consequence, connect with them on a deeper and personal level. Yet if leaders get carried away by this empathy, the community may grow overly—and unhealthily—dependent on them.

Empathy, however, though necessary, is not sufficient, for just as essential is the leader's *empowerment* of the follower. Indeed, the community needs to be loyal not so much to the leader but to the mission entrusted to them. The followers ought to commit themselves *directly* to the organization's mission and take their personal initiative in contributing to it. Anything less would be a failure of leadership.

Spirituality as a Source of Courage and Clear Thinking

One could say that Fr. Matthew Gonzalez[14] hit the ground running as the newly-appointed head of a Catholic high school. During his

[14]Not his real name.

very first year, a student sat on the ledge of their four-story building to decide whether or not to jump and end his life. It did not take long before word spread and the media appeared on the scene.

Fr. Matthew felt that he as the head of the institution could not delegate the job to anyone else, even if doing so would have been the easier and safer course of action. It was a risk that he as leader felt he had to take. He immediately appeared on the scene and, together with two or three other staff members, tried to talk the boy out of it in a calm manner for about an hour. The boy eventually listened and got off the ledge.

The call of duty did not end, however, after the boy changed his mind. Fr. Matthew had to attend personally to the boy's family, plan the de-briefing of the students and faculty, and deal with the media firestorm that followed. Asked what helped him deal with the problem, the priest named three things: 1) the decision to drop everything else and give his full personal attention to the situation, 2) his naturally calm disposition that allowed him to focus on the present moment and think clearly on his feet, and 3) his conviction that he was being accompanied and guided by God.

Fr. Matthew drew strength and guidance from his faith. He focused not on himself, the distress that he must have experienced, and the personal and institutional stakes involved but rather on prioritizing what needed to be done, and especially on providing care for those in the community who needed it the most. It was his interiority borne out of his religious faith that gave him both the courage to take necessary risks in the midst of vulnerability and the clear thinking to set the right priorities and say and do whatever the situation called for.

Conclusion

Our times call for a new spirituality of leadership especially for Catholic schools and universities. The spiritual practice of leadership can be defined operationally, I would argue, by a shift in focus from the leader's self to the mission and the community. This attentiveness

to the community's purpose and members enables leaders to transcend themselves in order to carry out the task of leadership. Moreover, while the religious faith of believers serves as an essential aid in nursing this spirituality, nonbelievers can also engage in the practice.

A spirituality essential to leadership, therefore, consists of a strong passion for the mission and a personal concern for the community. In an age of increasing vulnerability and complexity, it is this two-fold commitment to mission and community that constitutes the spirituality from which leaders can draw the courage and clear thinking so essential in the exercise of leadership.

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DISCOVERING THE PROFOUND WISDOM OF POPE PAUL VI'S *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*

James H. Kroeger, M.M.

St. Pope Paul VI (1963-1978), canonized forty years after his death on October 14, 2018, will always be remembered as a modern missionary pope. He made missionary journeys to all continents and authored *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), which became the *magna carta* for Catholic evangelization in the last quarter of Christianity's second millennium and without a doubt one of the most important ecclesial documents of the post-Vatican II era. It presents a concise, inspiring, and programmatic challenge for the Church to engage enthusiastically in her God-given mission to preach the Gospel to the contemporary world—to living peoples, with their aspirations and anxieties, their cultures and religions, their hopes and conflicts. EN boldly addresses the topic of evangelization in the modern world.

Cited on thirteen different occasions, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is the most quoted document in Pope Francis's 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium;* indeed, one finds that Francis began to regularly quote and praise EN early in his pontificate. He said in 2013 that EN includes words that "are as timely as if they had been written yesterday" (May 17) and called it "a very full text that has lost nothing of its timeliness" (June 13). In describing evangelization, he asserted that EN was "that basic point of reference which remains relevant" (July 27), and even went so far as to describe it as "to my mind the greatest pastoral

document that has ever been written to this day" (June 22). EN is undoubtedly the fertile soil from which Francis drew much as he authored *Evangelii Gaudium* (in addition to using other material from Paul VI). He clearly appreciates Paul VI, affirming that the latter's testimony "feeds us the flame of love for Christ, love for the Church, and gives us the momentum to announce the Gospel to the people of today, with mercy, patience, courage, and joy" (June 22).

Pope Francis reiterated his profound admiration for Paul VI and EN on June 16, 2014 when he opened the pastoral convention for the Diocese of Rome. In reference to EN, Francis stated:

> Still to this day it is the most important post-Conciliar pastoral document, which hasn't been surpassed. We should always go back to it. That Apostolic Exhortation is a great source of inspiration. And, it was the work of the great Paul VI, of his own hand. Because after that Synod, they couldn't decide whether they should do an Exhortation or not … and finally the *relator* (it was St. John Paul II) took all the papers and just handed them to the Pope, as if to say: "You handle this, brother!" Paul VI read them all and, with that patience of his, began to write. To me that is truly the pastoral testament of the great Paul VI. And, it hasn't been surpassed. It is a wealth of resources for pastoral life.

Background. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, a document of 23,000 words, was issued on December 8, 1975, having emerged from several rich sources and antecedents. Very few other papal documents in recent times have been prepared after so much prior consultation with so many different sections of the Church over so long a period of time. To understand the context and content of EN, it is necessary to examine the events surrounding the 1974 International Synod on Evangelization (Paul VI explicitly refers to the Synod over thirty times in EN).

The Synod (September 27-October 26, 1974) brought together over 200 bishops from all parts of the world along with some priests, religious, and laity in a consultative capacity. Three full years had been devoted to preparations on local, national, and continental levels. Pastoral experiences and approaches to evangelization were widely shared through a method that was decidedly inductive (rather than deductive) in its approach. The Churches in the so-called Third World

devoted much effort and enthusiasm to the process; one fine example was the dedicated commitment of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)—their First Plenary Assembly (in Taipei, Taiwan in April 1974) produced the insightful document *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia*.

When the 209 bishops arrived in Rome in late 1974, they were well-prepared, ready, and enthusiastic to engage in the Synod's work. Pope Paul VI opened the Synod with a Eucharist celebrated in the Sistine Chapel and delivered an opening address, encouraging frank discussion and honest exchange on the burning issues surrounding evangelization. He had set the stage and faithfully attended all the general assemblies as a silent but attentive listener.

The Synod proceeded according to its three planned stages: **a)** *communication of pastoral experiences*—these included five continental reports and about 175 speeches from the Synod Fathers; **b)** *reflection on interrelated theological themes*—an attempt was made to integrate theological elements and pastoral experiences; this met with difficulties and revealed many *lacunae;* and **c)** *preparation of conclusions*—working with an immense amount of material and items prepared by D. Grasso, K. Wojtyla, and D. Amalorpavadass, a drafting committee prepared a 41-page text.

On October 22 (just four days before the Synod's conclusion), three-quarters of the text was rejected—it had failed to capture the testimonies and insights as well as the searching and propositions that characterized the first three weeks of Synod work. The final session of the Synod (October 26, 1974) was thus awaited with keen interest. Pope Paul VI addressed the assembly frankly and openly: "the synod of bishops has ended.… We should want to assess its achievements.… We cannot but be genuinely satisfied and optimistic about its outcome."

The pope continued:

> The theme [of evangelization] is too wide and complex to be dealt with properly in so short a time or to yield all the conclusions to which its discussion might give rise. However, this Synod did again make the following contribution to the Church in our day: it enabled the voices

> of the local churches to be heard; it facilitated a better diagnosis of the current situation and a delineation of the principal elements of evangelization; it set in train the discussion of the practice and theory of evangelization in our time. For this reason we judge that the Synod as a whole has been fruitful. For it places at the disposal of Peter's successor, for the benefit of the entire Church, an abundance of advice, admonitions and proposals.

***Evangelii Nuntiandi* Emerges.** During a year-long gestation period, Paul VI labored to produce a document from the rich experience and insights of the Synod, one that is clearly the work of discernment and synthesis. EN is at once synodal and papal, and therefore deeply collegial. It is structured in seven thematic chapters framed within an introduction and conclusion, with chapter titles clearly indicating specific content (e.g., "What is Evangelization?", "The Methods of Evangelization"). The five-paragraph introduction contains several interpretive keys to the document.

Paul VI clearly saw his role in shaping EN as part of his papal responsibility of "encouraging our brethren in their mission as evangelizers." This task became for him "a daily preoccupation … and a fundamental commitment of our Pontificate" (1). What emerged as EN has been described as Paul VI's "last and finest apostolic exhortation, a novel and effective form of the magisterium."

EN, moreover, was not written as a tightly reasoned and carefully nuanced theological treatise (though excellent theological reflection pervades the document). Paul VI notes that his words were designed to be a "meditation on evangelization," and hopes that they will succeed "in inviting the whole People of God assembled in the Church to make the same meditation" (5). Indeed, the pope returns to the theme of meditation throughout EN (cf. 40, 76). It is this very personal, even conversational, style of meditative reflection and exhortation that many have found attractive. It invites a frequent return to EN—even more than forty years later—as Pope Francis promotes. It encourages personal reception and assimilation of the message. It exudes a poetic quality.

Paul VI notes that three key elements converge to highlight the importance of the promulgation of EN (2): the conclusion of the Holy Year (a special time of renewal); the tenth anniversary of the close of Vatican II (renewing the Church for mission); and the first anniversary of the 1974 Synod. The pope alludes to these anniversaries once again in the conclusion of EN, adding that the Church stands at "the eve of a new century, the eve also of the third millennium of Christianity" (81). It is clear that Paul VI wishes to focus the entire attention of the Church on the centrality of evangelization. He wishes to launch "a new period of evangelization" (2) so that Christ's followers "can bring the Christian message to modern man" (3) "with ever increasing love, zeal and joy" (1). Fulfillment of this task is, for the pope, "our heartfelt plea" (81).

Three leitmotifs of EN have already been mentioned: the papal commitment to evangelization, the role of meditation, and the centrality of evangelization in the life of the Church. A fourth theme centers on fidelity, a double fidelity—to God's message and to people (cf. 4, 39, 63). This fidelity is "the central axis of evangelization" (4).

Paul VI, in numerous places throughout EN, carefully defines, nuances, and balances diverse elements within the evangelization process (e.g., local and universal Church, culture and faith, liberation and evangelization, strengths and limitations of popular religiosity, etc.). It is his unique genius to have achieved integration and balance on so many topics. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* thus prolongs the reflection on evangelization begun in the 1974 Synod and makes its insights available to the entire Church. Paul VI, as Pope Francis emphasizes, has gifted the Church with an inspirational and pastoral handbook for modern missionary activity.

Describing Evangelization. Evangelization for many Catholics is a generally unfamiliar and relatively new term; only recently has it been gaining wider currency. Indeed, the Second Vatican Council and recent popes have placed evangelization at the center of the Church's identity and mission. One key goal of this presentation as such is to focus specifically on the unique contribution of Paul VI to the understanding of evangelization in all of its rich, complex, multi-

faceted, and interrelated dimensions. This piece, in a word, explores evangelization viewed holistically and integrally.

The word "evangelization" itself does not occur in the New Testament; *euaggelion*, however, meaning "gospel" or "good news," occurs 72 times, 54 of which are in the Pauline corpus. It has a wide range of meanings: the whole Christian message (Mk 1:1), the good news of Jesus (2 Cor 4:4), that it is for all (Mk 13:10; 16:15), and that it is a revelation of God (Gal 1:11-12) which is to be believed (Mk 1:15) and proclaimed (1 Cor 9:14, 16, 18). One must risk all for the Gospel (Mk 8:35; Rom 1:16), serve it (Rom 1:1; 15:16), and defend it (Phil 1:7, 16). *Euaggelion* is the good news of truth (Gal 2:5, 14), of hope (Col 1:23), of peace (Eph 6:15), of immortality (2 Tim 1:10), of the risen Christ (1 Cor 15:1ff; 2 Tim 2:8), and of salvation (Eph 1:13).

Vatican II speaks of evangelization in a variety of contexts: it is especially the bishops' task to promote evangelization by the faithful (*Christus Dominus* 6), it is associated with the mission of the laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2, 6, 20, 26; *Lumen Gentium* [LG] 35), priests are to learn the methods of evangelization (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* [PO] 19), and the Eucharist is the source and summit of all evangelization (PO 5). The Decree on Missions (*Ad Gentes*) is replete with references: "the specific purpose of missionary activity is evangelization and the planting of the Church" (6); "the Church has the obligation and the sacred right to evangelize" (7); to evangelize is an important task for catechists (17) as it is for the laity (21); the call to evangelize arises from a charism of the Spirit (23); and various roles are fulfilled by missionary institutes (27), *Propaganda Fidei* (29), the people of God (35, 36), bishops and priests (38), religious institutes (40), and young Churches (LG 17).

The pivotal contribution of Paul VI, following upon a solid foundation in Sacred Scripture and in the documents of Vatican II, has been to locate evangelization on "center-stage" in describing the Church's contemporary mission. An obvious question thus arises: How does one capture the rich thought of Pope St. Paul VI? This author takes the path of an extensive presentation of the pope's *seminal document* [EN] on the subject of evangelization; a concluding section is then composed of a synthetic overview of "integral evangelization."

Evangelization is Integral and Holistic. The understanding of the term "evangelization" as found in EN reflects a comprehensive and inclusive view; its use may be described as an "umbrella concept." This broad and holistic perspective respects the fullness and complexity of the evangelizing process which aims to achieve *effective* evangelization.

Sections 17 and 24 of EN provide a long list of the various elements that comprise the evangelizing action of the Church. Both sections also strongly insist on integrating and balancing all facets of evangelization: "Any partial and fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even distorting it" (17); "evangelization, as we have said, is a complex process made up of varied elements … they are complementary and mutually enriching" (24).

Paul VI explicitly notes that the Synod constantly challenged the Church "to relate these elements rather than to place them in opposition one to the other, in order to reach a full understanding of the Church's evangelizing activity" (24). The pope, in fact, set forth a comprehensive presentation in EN which has become widely accepted in the Church in later years; it is diversely termed "integral/holistic" and coupled with "evangelization/liberation/salvation."

Note the broad and inclusive manner in which Paul VI speaks: "evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity" (18), "upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment" (19); "what matters [thus] is to evangelize man's culture and cultures" (20) so as to overcome "the split between the Gospel and culture [which] is without doubt the drama of our time" (20). The scope of evangelization extends to the full transformation of humanity and cultures in the light of the Gospel. Indeed, additional examples from the pope's writings could be mentioned, all of them illustrating his broad and holistic view of evangelization. Here, then, is a key, a helpful category, a foundational insight, for an integrated interpretation of the entire text of EN.

Theological Foundations. Viewing evangelization holistically and integrally has important practical and pastoral ramifications.

It allows Christians to appreciate the myriad manifestations of evangelization, where individual gifts, talents, and charisms are desired and treasured (66), no individual or group is master of evangelization (15, 78), everyone acts "in communion with the Church" (60), and "the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God" (59).

These practical and pastoral dimensions of an integral approach to evangelization have solid theological foundations as their basis. They are anchored in "the Father's love" (26) and in the entire life, mission, practice, and witness of Jesus, "the first evangelizer" (7; cf. 6-12). The Church "is born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the Twelve"; she "in her turn is sent by Jesus" (15). In the power of the Spirit, "the Apostles depart to all the ends of the earth in order to begin the great work of the Church's evangelization" (75). A brief look at the footnote references of the first two chapters of EN reveals how closely linked these theological foundations are with Sacred Scripture and the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

EN contains several beautiful descriptions of the Church as an evangelizing community. "Evangelization is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize"; "evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church" (14). "The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself" (15).

Paul VI also makes an important clarification in the first section of Chapter III: "The Content of Evangelization." He speaks of the distinction between **a)** the *essential* elements and the "living substance" of the Gospel message and **b)** the *secondary* elements "whose presentation depends greatly on changing situations" (25). Within an integral view of evangelization, one must have a clear mind about the vital substance (26-28) in relation to the secondary aspects (29-39). Here the principle of "double fidelity" (4) enters once again—"evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social" (29). In the mind of Paul VI, this continued nuancing and balanced integration are certainly part of the "drama of fidelity" (39).

Diverse Synod Themes. It has been noted that the 1974 Synod on Evangelization ended inconclusively, and that the entire documentation of the proceedings was left in the pope's hands. EN thus reveals how Paul VI, not wishing the material to be lost, reworked many of the Synod's major themes into a stirring and unified presentation. In the mode of a pastoral synthesis, the pope addressed several questions pertaining to salvation and liberation (9, 27, 30-38), non-Christian religions (53, 80), religious liberty (39, 80), secularization (55), secularism (55-56), atheism (54-56), ecumenism (54, 76, 77), basic communities (58), diversified ministries (73), popular piety (48), sacraments in evangelization (23, 28, 47, 68), mass media (45, 80), the Church as sign and sacrament of salvation (23, 59), violence (37), the signs of the times (75-76), the local-universal Church dynamic (60-68), culture (20, 58), and the role of the Holy Spirit (75, 82).

In his final Synod speech, Paul VI identified many of these diverse topics as areas of evangelization that needed to be "better defined, nuanced, completed and subjected to further study." Indeed, commentators have noted how certain passages in EN closely resemble the actual interventions made on the Synod floor. EN is a testimony, therefore, that Paul VI was involved at the Synod as an intent listener and learner who then, through his papal "charism of discernment," fashioned his insights and reflections into a personal and spiritual testament on evangelization. EN is the fruit of long and profound meditation that nourishes the spiritual life, just as Pope Francis enthusiastically affirms!

Special Themes. This summary overview of the scope of evangelization found in EN presents only the highlights of this dense and rich document. Some special themes deserve additional comment.

EN is, in two ways, an important document for the emerging theology of the *local Church*. It presents what is basically a positive and firm link between the local and the universal Church, and shows the importance that the local community and its personal witnesses have in the whole process of inculturated evangelization. Basic ecclesial communities (58) have enormous potential to manifest the missionary character of the Church.

The document also contains a few direct references to the *missions* as they were traditionally known. How do missionary societies and organizations find their place in the contemporary world? Three specific tasks are mentioned in the fifth chapter: missionaries are to **a)** proclaim the Gospel for the first time to peoples and lands where it has not been heard (51), **b)** engage and interact with the faithful adherents of other religions (53), and **c)** assist the young Churches and promote missionary consciousness within them (56, 58).

The treatment of *world religions* in EN, however, is not sufficiently developed. This is remarkable for a document authored by Paul VI whose first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* was dedicated to the theme of dialogue and who in 1964 established the Secretariat for Non-Christians (which was renamed the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in 1988). There is no theological understanding of religions in EN (e.g., Are non-Christians saved *in* and *through* their religions? Can these faith-traditions be called "ways of salvation"?) even though several reasons for respecting and esteeming such religions are provided (53). The openness expressed at the Synod which affirmed the wide action of the Holy Spirit and manifested the desire for interreligious dialogue is not pursued or promoted in the document; indeed, the term "dialogue" is not even found in it at all. Nevertheless, one can be grateful for the encouragement given to fostering an open and respectful attitude toward the great religions of the world.

The role that EN assigns to the promotion of *justice and human liberation* within the Church's evangelizing mission is a curious one. Many helpful clarifications on the concept of liberation are presented (29-39), and the encyclical notes that "between evangelization and human advancement—development and liberation—there are in fact profound links" (31). To say that liberation "is not foreign to evangelization" (30), however, seems restrictive, and stands in contrast to the 1971 Synod that declared justice to be "a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel."

Impact on the Church. The Synod and EN have profoundly influenced the Church. They have provided the inspiration, emphasis, and methodology for placing evangelization in the center spotlight.

EN, for one, has inspired national and continental Church gatherings; "Evangelization at Present and in the Future of Latin America" (Puebla: CELAM, 1979) is only one of many examples. It has influenced the methodology of subsequent synods (a post-synodal document following a synod proper) as well as their topics of discussion (e.g., catechesis, family, reconciliation, youth, etc.) and affirmed key Vatican II documents (*Lumen Gentium, Gaudium et Spes,* and *Ad Gentes*) while promoting their reception and implementation in the Church.

The Synod and EN have also manifested the positive contribution of "third-world" local Churches and highlighted the benefits of an inductive, collegial, and reflective method of theologizing. The emergence of a truly "World Church" thus received forward impetus. Paul VI, for instance, began missionary journeys which became a common papal *modus operandi*, one which Pope Francis vigorously continues to this day. The Church has thus renewed her commitment to being a community of disciples and evangelizers (13, 15, 21, 24, 59, 66, 80) who are filled with joy and enthusiasm (73, 80), eager to give authentic witness (41, 76) under the dynamic action of the Holy Spirit, the principal agent of evangelization (75), and be guided by Mary, the Star of Evangelization (82).

Synthetic Overview of Integral Evangelization. Pope Paul VI without a doubt has gifted the Church with rich insights into the theology and praxis of evangelization. Indeed, simply recalling the many facets of evangelization presented in the previous sections of this paper bears out the fact that *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is a microcosm of his understanding of missionary evangelization. Can the discussion be taken further though?

Additional insight can be drawn from two documents issued by the Secretariat for Non-Christians (which, as noted earlier, was founded in 1964 by Paul VI and renamed in 1988 as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue). On Pentecost Sunday in 1984, the Secretariat promulgated the document entitled "The Attitude of the Church toward the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission" (DM). Hidden in this little-known work on the interrelationship between dialogue and mission

is a pivotal statement which affirms that mission and evangelization are understood "in the consciousness of the Church as a single but complex and articulated reality" (13).

Seven years later, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue presented the document "Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (DP) in conjunction with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples on Pentecost Sunday in 1991. Once again, the evangelizing mission of the Church is understood therein as a "single but complex and articulated reality" (2).

Both documents emphasize the unity and integral nature of evangelization while affirming at the same time that evangelization necessarily comprises many dimensions; it is indeed a complex reality. One notes, nevertheless, that this multi-faceted concept (evangelization) can be explained and articulated.

Naming the Elements of "Integral Evangelization." Despite their lengthy and complex titles, these two documents just mentioned have added considerable clarity to a Catholic understanding of missionary evangelization. This results from the fact that "principal elements" are specifically named, with mission and evangelization being composed of: **a)** presence and witness, **b)** commitment to social development and human liberation, **c)** interreligious dialogue, **d)** proclamation and catechesis, and **e)** liturgical life, prayer, and contemplation (cf. DM 13 and DP 2). In a word, the one evangelizing mission of the Church is made up of several component elements and authentic forms. This is integral or holistic evangelization; this is—in compact expression—the wide view of evangelization promoted by Paul VI in EN.

Taking the thought of Paul VI in EN and expressing it in a manner that many Catholics can readily grasp and appreciate, this five-point vision has served the Church well over the past decades. At the same time, it does not do violence to the richness and complexity of missionary evangelization; indeed, one easily perceives that the thought expressed in EN is adequately captured in this helpful schema.

Employing it thus enables a smooth maneuvering through lengthy papal documents. It is a Catholic vision that views evangelization through its various essential dimensions, thereby resulting in clarity, insight, and proper integration.

Exploring the Five Elements. Further insight into the integral nature of evangelization can be attained by specifically relating its five principal elements with EN. Such an exercise illustrates that "evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity" (EN 18). Readers should note, however, that while this overview is centered on the content of EN, specific references will also be given to two other papal documents on evangelization: St. John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* (RM; 1990) and Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG; 2013).

According to Paul VI, *Christian presence and witness of life* form the "initial act of evangelization" (EN 21). People desire and respect authentic witnesses (cf. EN 41; RM 11, 42; EG 14, 20, 119-121, 149-151). As such, daily activities, living together in harmony, lives led with integrity, duties in the community—all these are to be elements of a basic "faith-witness" that demonstrates how Christian living is shaped by Christian faith and values. Through this wordless witness, "Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live" (EN 21). Mother Teresa of Calcutta (canonized in 2016), for instance, who is known for her loving and selfless care of the poorest of the poor, stands as an "icon" of Christian presence, life, and service (EA 7).

Living based on faith convictions as good neighbors in community should naturally issue in a *commitment to social development and human liberation*, in a genuine service of humanity. This means serving the most unfortunate, witnessing to justice, and defending the integrity of creation. It is a dimension of evangelization that includes all areas of social concern ranging from peace-building to education, health services, and promoting family life and good government. Areas of human development or human promotion are vast domains of the Church's evangelizing mission (cf. EN 18-19, 29-33; RM 58-60; EG 50-109, 181-185, 197-216).

All evangelizing activities are inserted into specific contexts, and they naturally assume an interreligious dimension particularly in Asia. As is the case with most places in the world of today, the Church in Asia accomplishes her mission in pluralistic and diverse cultures; she enters into *interreligious dialogue*, cooperating with the followers of the great religious traditions. John Paul II asserts that "interreligious dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission" (RM 55). It emerges from one's faith convictions and takes many forms, including but not limited to dialogues of daily life, deeds of service, religious experts, and faith experience. Indeed, dialogue with religions and cultures is the truly appropriate Christian response in contemporary circumstances (cf. EN 20, 53; RM 52-54, 55-57; EG 115-118, 238-243, 250-254).

In mission today, there is the role of *explicit Gospel proclamation and catechesis*. This dimension of evangelization includes preaching, catechesis on Christian life, and teaching the content of the faith; in a word, this means "telling the Jesus story." When the Holy Spirit opens the door and when the time is opportune, Christians do tell the Jesus story, giving explicit witness and testimony to the faith. Others are invited, in freedom of conscience, to follow and to know Jesus. Christians themselves, moreover, are further instructed in their faith through proclamation, the process by which the faith is communicated to the next generation of believers (cf. EN 22, 27, 42; RM 44-51; EG 3, 12, 24, 110-111, 246).

Finally, no one can effectively be engaged in the Church's mission without a strong faith- and prayer-life. Integral evangelization and liberation will necessarily include *liturgical life, prayer, and contemplation*. Evangelization needs holy women and men who are themselves on fire with the love of Christ, for only those already burning with an experience of Christ can spread the fire of the Gospel. Holiness is an irreplaceable condition for evangelizers. The "God-experience" achieved in prayer and contemplation, in sacramental and liturgical life, will illumine and transform all other dimensions of evangelization (cf. EN 23, 43-44, 47; RM 46-49, 87-92; EG 47, 173, 259-288).

These five dimensions of an integral understanding of evangelization obviously complement and reinforce each other. Paul VI, in speaking

of the complexity of the Church's evangelizing action, gives a timely admonition: "Any partial and fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even of distorting it." He continues on to say that "it is impossible to grasp the concept of evangelization unless one tries to keep in view all its essential elements" (EN 17).

An older concept of the Church's mission has thus been set aside. No longer are the elements of social justice, interfaith dialogue, peacebuilding, ecology initiatives, education and health care, life-witness, etc. simply "preparatory" to evangelization (*praeparatio evangelica*); all five "principal elements" are constitutive of an integral understanding. Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Francis have expanded the horizons of evangelization; the more restrictive view, which held that only explicit Gospel proclamation and sacramental life constituted mission, has been superseded.

One finds, concomitant with this expanded vision of evangelization, a renewed emphasis on the missionary nature of the *entire* Church (cf. AG 2; EN 14, 59; RM 61-76; EG 14, 20, 119-121). Previously, the laity often found it difficult to appreciate how they were to be evangelizers when evangelization used to be linked more exclusively with explicit Gospel proclamation and sacramental life. Today, every baptized individual, whether layperson, ordained, or religious, is an evangelizer. Catholic evangelization now engages the entire Church (from top to bottom, and especially all the local churches), all states of life (lay, religious, ordained, married, single), and all apostolic activities and forms of witness (the five principal elements). Indeed, the totality of Christian missionary evangelization embraces all these aspects.

Conclusion. This piece has attempted to present a panoramic overview of Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* as well as a Catholic vision of evangelization. After many words have been uttered, after much ink has been spilt, after definitions and categories have been clarified, and after one more presentation has been completed, Catholic Christians must step back and radically affirm that *all mission and evangelization is God's project, that the Holy Spirit is always the principal agent*

of evangelization. For evangelizers, missionaries, catechists, religious, and laypersons alike, mission necessarily means trying to find out what God wills and what he is doing. The authentic evangelizer then bends her/his will to God's own, joyfully surrenders to God's loving plan, and expends all efforts and her/his energy to become a worthy instrument that enables God's design to unfold. Evangelization, at heart and center, is an issue of faith (cf. RM 11). For Christians, to live is to evangelize, to truly become "missionary disciples" (EG 120)!

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THE MYSTIQUE OF DIALOGUE

Pathway to Spirit Power for Liberative Struggle

Jojo M. Fung, S.J.

The experience of journeying for more than two decades with the indigenous peoples—such as the Lakota and the Apache of North America, the Murut of Sabah and the Semai of Perak in Malaysia, the Bontoc and Ifugao of the Philippines, the Karen and Lahu of northern Thailand, and the Kayah and Kayan of Myanmar—has been most enriching. They have taught a most invaluable lesson—that interaction and participation in their rituals entail recognizing the mystique of intercultural-religious dialogue.

In the first section of this article, I will explain a more contextual version of interreligious experience which involves a period of "discipling" under the immediate tutorship of a reputable shaman or spirit-guide of primordial or deceased shamans. In the second section, I will offer a more contextual reflection on the fourfold dialogue as enjoined by the Asian Bishops in the light of my interreligious experience. I will then explain in the third section why this reflection calls for greater recognition of the mystique in our dialogue with the indigenous peoples. Indeed, reflecting on my interreligious experience convinces me that dialogue must be about empowering the indigenous peoples to access and actualize the spirit power for the liberative struggle against the neocolonial imperialism that in turn spawns the globalization of neo-liberal capitalism.

1. "Discipling" as Integral to Dialogue

Indigenous shamanism is one of the many religious traditions in Asia that predate Christianity and offers a unique and valid process of "discipling" under the guidance of a *guru* in the person of the shaman. While Christianity has its own rites of initiation—the Catholic Church, for example, has the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist, the process of "discipling" in indigenous shamanism is markedly different.

With its age-old beliefs and practices stemming from the ancient civilizations of ethnic groups, indigenous shamanism offers various ways of initiation.[1] For instance, what I term a "baptism" into the deep mysteries of life offers a pathway into the actual experience of shamanism in a Murut village community called Bantul in Sabah, East Malaysia. This "baptism" calls for the humbling of oneself to take one's place as an uninitiated and begin what can be a lifelong filial relationship with the master. Indeed, a certain passion to live with a community-acclaimed master-shaman in the rural village and learn at his feet is what drives an aspirant. The master-shaman in turn exercises the sole discretion to present the selected aspirant, should she or he be deemed suitable, to the spirit-world for approval and admission to apprenticeship. This period of apprenticeship is informal, ranging from daily conversations and doing daily chores with the master-shaman to actual ritual celebration.

This informal "rural school" begins with the initial stage of dipping in the waters of shamanism, known to the initiated Muruts as "*na rio*" (taking a bath). Upon completion of the first phase, the initiate enters into a more advanced level of immersion in which the master-shaman guides her or him in calling the different spirits to heal the sick,

[1]Among the indigenous communities of the Arecuna and Taulipang in South America, "the shamanic novitiate was reported to last from ten to twenty years" (L. Sullivan, *Icanchu's Drum: An Orientation to Meaning in South American Religions* [New York: Macmillan / London: Collier Macmillan, 1988], 395 [see 386–465 for details]).

deliver those possessed by evil spirits, or improve the well-being of the community and the harmonious relationship between the human world and the spirit-world which guards over the Murut people, the river, the forests, and the land.

The rituals are occasions for the master-shaman to dictate more incantations which the spirit-guide offers to the initiate. The master-shaman will instruct the initiate on the intended purposes of the incantations and the kinds of occasions when such incantations can be used. The initiate is under the guidance of the master-shaman who "disciples" her or him through daily conversations and a series of rituals up until this point, after which she or he begins learning under the tutorship of the guiding spirits.

On certain evenings during the season of the "full moon," the initiate has to live alone with the master-shaman, in a hut away from the community, so that the latter can introduce the initiate to the family of spirits that the master-shaman is in touch with. The initiate recognizes the spirit-guide(s) assigned to him or her, in addition to the names given earlier, in this face-to-face encounter. The master-shaman then initiates the apprentice gradually into the art of "summoning" and "communicating" with the spirit-guides, allowing the latter to enter into a more personal and closer relationship with the family of spirits.

When the master-shaman passes away, the apprentice becomes the medium of communication with the family of spirits and continues to mediate the power of the spirits for the common well-being of the indigenous communities and their everyday struggle for dignity and livelihood. With the exercise of these powers from the spirits, the disciple-shaman is gradually acclaimed as the community shaman and, over time, even as the shaman of the indigenous peoples in the wider region.

This whole process of the initiation and formation of a "novice shaman" into a "qualified shaman" who acts as an intermediary between the community and the spirit-world is strewn with what Aloysius Pieris calls a "soteriological nucleus not yet assimilated into Christian consciousness," and yet "an Asian theology of liberation lies

hidden there" and the "recovery of an ancient revelation is indeed a new creation."[2] My immersion into indigenous shamanism has convinced me that God reveals its salvific value and has further persuaded me that God saves indigenous peoples (soteriology) through the worship and practices of their primal religions.

Reflecting thus on my own process of "discipling" and on the subsequent "baptism" into the deep mysteries of life in light of the double insights of Pieris, I felt a call to accompany these indigenous poor of Asia and unleash the soteriological power of their shamanic beliefs through the celebration of their shamanic rituals.[3] Indigenous shamanism is a source of liberative power not just for indigenous peoples but also for the teeming masses who suffer from crushing poverty and oppressive marginalization. Like other religious beliefs and practices of the poor, indigenous religiosity has the liberative power to free a world caught up in a model of unsustainable development that relentlessly exploits both natural and human resources because of greed and the lust for power.

A germinal liberation theology of sustainability also lies in indigenous religiosity. This liberation theology empowers the poor and enables them to supplant the logic of global capitalism with the logic of sustainable livelihood and development, one in which the earth's resources are cared for, thereby leaving enough for all. It is a sufficiency that is based on our just and harmonious relationship with fellow human beings and with Mother Earth.

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[2]A. Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 71.

[3]See J. Fung, *Garing the Legend: A Decorated Hero, a Renowned Shaman*, Sabah Museum (Kota Kinabalu, Sabah: Percetakan Kolombong Ria, 2006); J. Fung, "An Asian Liberation Theology of Sacred Sustainability: A Local Theology in Dialogue with Indigenous Shamanism," *Asian Horizons* 4:2 (2010): 401–415; J. Fung, *A Shamanic Theology of Sacred Sustainability: Church and Shamans in Dialogue for Liberative Struggle in Asia* (Quezon City: Jesuit Communications Foundation Inc., 2014).

2. Dialogue with Indigenous Communities

In his 1991 encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope St. John Paul II highlighted the importance of the "dialogue of life" which includes three additional related aspects: cooperation in social concerns, theological exchange, and the sharing of religious experience (56–57). In the context of my experience in interacting with indigenous peoples, this "dialogue of life" calls for the dialogue of accompaniment, of sharing religious experience, and of liberative struggle (RM 59).

2.1. Dialogue of Accompaniment

The shamans believe that accompaniment is "from within"—first, they live in the midst of the village communities; second, they guide the communities through ritual celebrations so that they have an inner mystical experience of the sacred power of the spirits. Through communal prayers, chants, and dance, the shamans enter into the sacred presence of God, into an intimate and mystical experience of God through trances or altered states of consciousness (ASC), God who descends and missions them to act on God's behalf as salvific intermediaries.

Like Moses who guided the Israelite tribes across the Red Sea (or sea of reeds?) and through the wilderness to the promised land, who acted as their intermediary to obtain from the Lord manna and quails (Exod. 16:1–36) as well as potable water (Exod. 17:1–7) and, most important of all, the Sinai covenant and its laws (Exod. 24) which governed their relationship with God, the shamans accompany the indigenous communities in seeking God constantly in ritual celebrations and act on God's counsels for the good of the group. These shamans' intimate experience of God in ritual celebrations resonates with Jesus's own theophanic Abba-experiences at his baptism, transfiguration, and at Gethsemane before his arrest (Jn. 12:28–30; Lk. 22:43–44).

Through such recurrent and intimate mystical experiences of God, the shamans are empowered to guide the indigenous communities in

avoiding or forsaking all forms of addiction, evil desires, and greed especially. In this way, the marginal indigenous communities are delivered from the burden of poverty and given the opportunity to engage in sustainable livelihood with dignity, justice, and peace.

In this dialogue, the shamans delight in a Church that encourages them to establish a network of male and female shamans so that they feel strengthened as a collective of like-minded specialists who serve as community elders, healers, exorcists, prophets, ritual performers, or teachers. The presence and accompaniment of the Church during the process of organizing the network thus lends moral support to the shamans, legitimizing the shamanic traditions as loci of God's revelation and salvation[4] since—as Craffert unequivocally postulates[5]—the shamans are types of the Galilean shamanic figure Jesus of Nazareth. The Church acknowledges and affirms their revelatory and salvific significance in the economy of God's plan of salvation.[6] Indeed, as envisaged by Fr. Jean-Pierre Oxibar, the empowering presence and protection of the Church ensures the "full flourishing" of these shamanic traditions.[7]

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[4]F.-J. Eilers, ed., *For All the Peoples of Asia* Vol. II: *FABC Documents from 1992–1996* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), 212.

[5]P. Craffert, *The Life of a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in Anthropological-Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2008), 296.

[6]Eilers, *For All the Peoples of Asia* II; see also the 1995 document of the FABC Office of Evangelization based on a conference held in Hua Hin, Thailand with the theme *Evangelization Among the Indigenous Peoples of Asia*.

[7]The Lahu regarded Betharram priest Jean-Pierre Oxibar (1898–1964) as a prophet, liberator, and protector of theirs who "rejoiced in such indigenous traditions as being those of a people who, like his own Basques, could become Christians but still express their joy of life through the ways of their ancestors." Saint-Guily states that it was Oxibar's hope, moreover, that "these ancestral traditions would flower still more gracefully" under the protection of the new religion and "through his presence and his prayers." For more detail, see Anthony R. Walker, *Merit and the Millennium: Routine and Crisis in the Ritual Lives of the Lahu People* (New Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corp., 2003), 621.

The Church, moreover, can help solve some problems which the shaman faces regarding the religious practices of their rituals. A case in point is family members' lack of full participation in the rites under the care of the shaman—the absence of family members hinders the shaman from performing the rites, calls into question the efficacy of the religious ritual, and thereby undermines the shaman's authority, which is a traumatic experience for him and can cause sickness and/or madness. A Church that is supportive of indigenous religion and recognizes its positive contribution to family spirituality and solidarity can therefore encourage participation in the shamanic rituals.

2.2. Dialogue of Religious Experience

The nature of this dialogue enjoins the Church of Asia to put out into the deep by plunging into the ritual celebrations so as to take delight in the sacred presence of the mystic Owner and absolute Being, *Taj Thi Ta Tau*. This dialogue of religious experience enables the Church to understand the importance of entering into the inner world of the mystical experience of the shamans,[8] allowing her to comprehend and appreciate the richness therein and thus be disposed to receive the revelation of God who is at work in their rites.[9]

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[8]Fung, *A Shamanic Theology of Sacred Sustainability*, 10.

[9]Participation in the shamanic rituals draws its assurance and inspiration from the Asian Bishops who state that in Asia,

> the dialogue of prayer and spirituality is highly valued. Prayer together, in ways congruent with the faith of those who take part, is an occasion for Christians and followers of other faiths to appreciate better the spiritual riches which each group possesses, as well as to grow in respect for one another as fellow pilgrims on the path through life. Human solidarity is deepened when people approach the divine as one human family. (Formation Institute for Interreligious Affairs IV, August 20–25 [Pattaya, Thailand: 2001], 8; available at https://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2001/09/11/fabc-leadership-training-calls-for-culture-of-dialogue&post_id=1147)

Rather than always being discursive and academic, this dialogue of religious experience with the shamans is conversational, celebratory, and, therefore, experiential. There will be opportunities to attend and participate in the ritual celebrations upon the invitation of the shamans by either listening to the chants as observers or taking part in communal dancing as participants in order to experience being possessed by the divine spirit (*rûaḥ 'ĕlohîm*). Such spirit-possession will enable the participants to gain an insight into the mystical experience of the shamans, an inner experience that complements what is observed on the outside. It is thus important for the participants to have both the observational experience of the outer world and celebratory experience of the inner world of the spirit in order to attain the desired complementarity of human and mystical experiences.

This dialogue of religious experience will also allow the Church of Asia to understand more about the inscrutable omnipresence of the Pentecostal Spirit[10] that shattered the mono-ecclesial Jewish community and poured forth into the multi-cultural milieu of the Greco-Roman world. Indeed, this universalization of the presence and manifestation of the Creative Spirit, alluded to in the multi-glossarial phenomenon experienced at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13), is well attested to even now by

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FABC III (Bangkok, 1982) urges the Church of Asia to journey in dialogue with people of other faiths so that we can better discern how God speaks to them in their lives, rituals, and histories as well as through them to us.

[10]The Asian bishops state the same conviction, that

> Christians believe that God's saving will is at work, in many different ways, in all religions. It has been recognized since the time of the apostolic Church, and stated clearly again by the Second Vatican Council (cf. GS 22; LG 16), that the Spirit of Christ is active outside the bounds of the visible Church (cf. *Redemptor hominis*, 6). God's saving grace is not limited to members of the Church, but is offered to every person.… His ways are mysterious and unfathomable, and no one can dictate the direction of His grace. (Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs II, Nov. 13–20 [Kuala Lumpur: 1979], 12; available at http://www.fabc.org/fabc%20papers/fabc_paper_25.pdf)

the shamans, religious sages, and the Church of Asia that is involved in this dialogue of religious experience.

The multi-religio-cultural manifestation of the Spirit paves the way for the Church to enter into a gradual understanding of the alternative ways by which shamans and indigenous communities express their religious experience as well as how they articulate their experience of being possessed and empowered by the Spirit, their understanding of God, and the liberative-salvific mission of this God. This articulation, done either on a one-on-one basis or in a small group, is more of a conversational sharing which involves recognition and clarification of what each dialogue partner is saying.

Yet what appears to be personal sharing is indeed an ongoing verbalized reflection on the mystical experiences of the shamanic ritual celebrations. By participating in this conversation, the Church is able to understand the revelation of God in and through the shamanic traditions. The Creative Spirit is already at work, purifying, elevating current understanding, and completing the experience with a new awareness so that the "elements of truth, of grace and goodness" that are not only "in the minds and hearts" of indigenous shamans and communities but also in "the rites and customs" of indigenous peoples are "healed, elevated, and completed" by God's Spirit (AG no. 9, LG no. 17).

In this dialogical process, the Church is able to perceive, intuit, and understand how God's Spirit speaks from within the shamans' inner or mystical experiences. It is important for her to comprehend the verbalization of their shamanic spirituality—the uniqueness of their God (*Theos*) who descends as Spirit (*Pneuma*), invisible to the human eye but able to be experienced in the human heart as a divine touch and mystical spark. The Church needs to experience and understand how the shamans come under the influence and guidance of the Creative Spirit and thus become divinely inspired, and how this Spirit-Savior (*Sôtêr*) liberates their people in their life-struggles as marginalized communities.

The Church, in fact, witnesses in the shamans' communal prayer, chant, and dance the living indigenous theology, pneumatology, and

soteriology arising from within the communities of believers in the primal religions. The growth and blossoming of a local theology, pneumatology, and soteriology are nurtured by the Creative Spirit "blowing where it wills" (Jn. 3:8), operating in and out of ecclesiastical structures and never totally monopolized or domesticated yet always empowering, liberating, and saving God's marginalized peoples.

As an intermediary of God in the dialogue, the Church in turn is invited to affirm the shamans' verbalized understanding and supplement it with whatever is needed to enrich and liberate their local theologies from any undue shadows of unethical influence. Finally, the Church as co-pilgrim is enjoined to "lift up" (as opposed to suppress and denigrate [cf. Jn. 8:28; 12:32; cf. Nb. 21:8]) the local indigenous theologies and communicate them in a language intelligible to the outside world so as to challenge and enrich the local, regional, and global Church and society.[11]

2.3. Dialogue of Liberative Struggle

Enkindled by shamanic God-experiences; empowered by indigenous theology, pneumatology, and soteriology; and motivated by an indigenous spirituality, both dialogue partners are poised for action—for the praxis of liberative struggle involving the indigenous communities in partnership with other stakeholders in civil and political society, and always in collaboration with the local councils and interfaith networks at the local and national levels.

The communities struggle for the land to ensure a sustainable livelihood with greater security and dignity in their villages. In the interfaith prayer service, the community invokes the Divine to recreate and sanctify the sacred space in their ancestral homeland. In the collective rite of sacralizing the forests, the people call upon

[11]The Asian Bishops have declared that "in each local church, each people's history, each people's culture, meanings and values, each people's traditions are taken up, not diminished nor destroyed, but celebrated and renewed, purified if need be, and fulfilled … in the life of the Spirit" (International Mission Congress [Manila: 1979], 15).

Him to protect the sources of water for irrigation, the rice grains to be used for sowing, the fields to be planted, etc. The communal struggle can also take the form of a crusade against the encroachment of developers and annexation of land by the hegemonic states, or a campaign against a neo-liberal economy that violates the dignity and security of marginal communities.

The Church of Asia, on the other hand, is enjoined by the shamans to engage as a dialogue partner in a liberative struggle with their peoples at the various levels. But how? At the socio-cultural level, the Church needs to respect the otherness of the cultural and religious identity of indigenous peoples so they are not totally assimilated by the dominant cultures. At the ecclesial level, she ought to give indigenous communities the democratic space to articulate their indigenous theologies and practice their shamanic spiritualities which call for the sacred sustainability of the earth and preservation of all life forms found therein. Finally, the Church at the local-regional-global structural level should support indigenous communities in their liberative struggle for freedom from the oppressive hegemony of global capitalism (see section 4 below).

The Church of Asia has much to gain from the dialogue with indigenous shamans in becoming a more inculturated Church among indigenous peoples. In this way, she will learn to treat the shamans with reverence, emulate their model of accompaniment, respect their mystical experiences of God, and support the liberative struggle of indigenous peoples for the sustainability of their livelihood in their ancestral homeland.

3. The Mystique of Dialogue

The experience of dialogue with indigenous peoples always brings us into the spirit-world—the realm of YHWH and His divine assembly (Ps. 82:1), of the sons of God (Ps. 29:1), the righteous people (*ṣaddîqîm / dikaioi*) in the Bible, and of "[all] those who have died and gone before us marked with the sign of faith" (Eucharistic Prayer I). More than just a memory, this spirit-world is a living presence and divine power that

suffuses the human world and consciousness itself. Indigenous wo/men elders, healers, sages, and shamans thus experience the mystery and power of the spirit-world whose presence they feel all the time. And yet we, too, can experience it through recurrent exposure to the indigenous spirituality of the community, mediated as it were through their seasonal ritual celebrations such as the annual water spirit ritual.

This lived spirituality of the indigenous community is best described as an embodied sense of an everyday mysticism,[12] a mystical sense of the spirit's presence and power that is akin to Rahner's insight that "the experience meant here is the experience of eternity"[13] because the suffusing sacredness, in all its infinite expansiveness, is experienced in our midst as plausible. This mystical sense is the lived mindfulness of the eclipse and a compenetration of the *anthropos*, the *cosmos*, and the spirit-world in this open and multiversal space of God's creation. It is a recurrent yet constant awareness that those in the spirit-world "are here with us, with power, accessible for our everyday resistance and liberative struggle." It is similar perhaps to the Ignatian mysticism of "seeing all things in God and God in all things"[14] and of always being thankful for God's presence in everyone and everything in creation.[15]

This mystical sense of the compenetrative presencing of the spirit-world enables the everyday mystics of the indigenous communities to explain that humans actually live in a web of interdependency

[12]See Karl Rahner, "Reflections on the Experience of Grace," in *Theological Investigations* III, trans. Karl H. & B. Kruger (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1967), 87–88 and Harvey D. Egan, *Karl Rahner: Mystic of Everyday Life* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1998), 60–61, 76–77.

[13]Rahner, "Reflections on the Experience of Grace."

[14]Cf. the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (Sp. Ex. 230–234).

[15]In the October 4, 2010 report on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, remarked that "of course, in our encounter with others, our Ignatian tradition trains us to use methods which are discerning, contemplative, and grateful for God's presence alive in everyone and everything."

and interrelations that is suffused with sacredness and mystery.[16] In this cosmic relational web, the mystical sense makes us realize that "everything is sacred and rituals make everything sacred" due to the suffusing and sacralizing presence of the spirit-world.[17]

This mystical sense also enables us to appropriate mystical cosmology and anthropology in a mystical age[18] with the paradigmatic shift in consciousness that we are *homo spiritus* and *homo shamanicus*.[19] In other words, we are spirit-bodies with a mindfulness of the everyday presence and power of the spirit-world. The Great Creative Spirit

[16]This mystery is characterized, as quantum physics suggests, by complementarity, complexification, probability, profundity, synchronicity, unpredictability, and even a profound sense of direction. See D. O'Murchú, *In the Beginning was the Spirit: Science, Religion, and Indigenous Spirituality* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 46, 72–73; M. Hathaway & L. Boff, *The Tao of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 316; H. Russell, "Quantum Anthropology: Reimaging the Human Person as Body/Spirit," *Theological Studies* 74:4 (2013): 934–959; J. Polkinghorne, *Quantum Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 25–26, 36–38; C. Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003); B. Cox & J. Forshaw, *The Quantum Universe (And Why Anything That Can Happen, Does)* (Boston: Da Capo, 2011).

[17]As for understanding God as creative activity, see Jürgen Moltmann (1985, xii; see also O'Murchú, *In the Beginning was the Spirit*, 138) who used the phrase "God the Holy Spirit … is *in* all created things." This God, in the postulation of Gordon D. Kaufman, "is an activity rather than a person" for "God is our name for the creativity in nature" and "the creativity in nature is God enough." See Gordon D. Kaufman, *In the Beginning: Creativity* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 2004), xi, 48; Stuart A. Kauffman, *Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 284, 142; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1976); O'Murchú, *In the Beginning was the Spirit*, 51, 59, 138.

[18]See F. Tuoti, *The Dawn of the Mystical Age: An Invitation to Enlightenment* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1997) and Kathleen Coyle, "Theology and the New Cosmology: A Quantum Leap in Theological and Spiritual Insight," *EAPR* 50:2 (2013): 189–205.

[19]See J. Fung, "Sacred Time for a Sacred Sojourn in the Mystical Age," *Ignis* XLII/IV (2013.4): 7–32.

along with ancestral and nature spirits alert and communicate with us through discernible signs such as dreams, calls of the birds and animals, and natural calamities like droughts, climate change, superstorms, and polar vortexes. At the same time, the spirit-world seeks human cooperation and agency in the activity of suffusing, sacralizing, sensitizing, and sustaining the *cosmos* and *anthropos*.

4. Gaining Access for Actualization

The *homo spiritus/shamanicus* endeavors to live out the Ignatian charism of being a "discerning person" (*anthropos diakritikos*) who is "perpetually mindful or watchful of God working in all things and at all times."[20] The human person, in other words, lives with a mystical sense that facilitates connection and communication with the cosmic spirit power; it is in the state of one-spirit-ness that the *homo spiritus/shamanicus* senses and discerns the disclosures from the spirit-world.

Once these communications are discerned and understood, the *homo spiritus/shamanicus* becomes the mediatory conduit of the spirit power in defending local indigenous communities against the onslaughts of rapacious capitalists and exploitative corporations. Such assaults are perpetrated by the hegemonic forces of the global oligarchy controlled by what Dean Henderson dubbed as the "Eight Families" (Goldman Sachs, Rockefeller, Lehman, Kuhn Loeb, Rothschild, Warburg, Lazard; and Israel Moses Seif) who operate the "Four Horsemen" of the oil cartel (Exxon Mobil, Chevron Texaco, BP Amoco and Royal Dutch/Shell) and the "Four Horsemen" of banking (*Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, and Wells Fargo*)[21] with their colossal influence

[20]See Aloysius Pieris, "Spirituality as Mindfulness: The Biblical and Buddhist Versions," in Patrick Gnanapragasam & Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, eds., *Negotiating Borders: Theological Explorations in the Global Era* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2008), 185–198, particularly 187.

[21]*D. Henderson, The Federal Reserve Cartel: The Eight Families. Centre for Research on Globalization. Available at* https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-federal-reserve-cartel-the-eight-families/25080 *(accessed June 6, 2018).*

over the CFR (Council on Foreign Relations), GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), RIIA (the Royal Institute of International Affairs), G7/G8 and G22, UN, WB, WTO, and IMF.[22] It is a menace that must be confronted by mounting multi-sectoral and multi-level countercultural movements of solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized populace of the world. Such subaltern movements need to wed religio-cultural sensibilities and wisdom with the cosmic-divine power of the creation-wide spirit-world, thereby producing a confluence that enables the *homo spiritus/shamanicus* to access and actualize the cosmic power for the reversal of the neocolonial and liberal capitalist cartels' hegemony. Indeed, the globalization of this "mindful access" to the spirit-world gradually makes possible the eruption of the insurrectional power of the subaltern movements[23] for concerted action[24] against the systemic injustice and despotic oppression that perpetuate the hegemony of the global cartels.[25]

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[22]See T. Volgy, K. Kanthak, D. Frazier, & R. Ingersoll, "The G7, International Terrorism and Domestic Politics: Modeling Policy Cohesion in Response to Systemic Disturbance," *International Interactions* 30:3 (2004): 191–209; Peter Kanyandago, "Globalization: A Reflection on Its Anthropological Underpinnings in Relation to Social Justice," in Gnanapragasam & Fiorenza, *Negotiating Borders*, 457–464, here at 461; and Philip L. Wickeri, "Globalization and Transnational Christianity: Notes on Intercontextual Theology and the Present Ecumenical Situation," in Gnanapragasam & Fiorenza, *Negotiating Borders*, 464–483, here at 466.

[23]See Etienne Balibar, "Outlines of a Topography of Cruelty: Citizenship and Civility in the Era of Global Violence," *Constellations* 8:1 (2001): 15–29, here at 18; Nevzat Soguk, "Border's Capture: Insurrectional Politics, Border-Crossing Humans, and the New Political," in Prem Kumar Rajaram & Carl Grundy-Warr, eds., *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 283–308, here at 296–299.

[24]Felix Wilfred believes that "the hope for tomorrow lies in the resistance today" in his article "Searching for David's Sling: Tapping the Local Resources of Hope" (*Concilium* [2004], 85–95, here at 86).

[25]See Dean Henderson, *Big Oil & Their Bankers in the Persian Gulf: Four Horsemen, Eight Families & Their Global Intelligence, Narcotics & Terror Network* (Carson City, NV: Bridger House Pub., 2010) and Dean Henderson, *The Grateful Unrich:*

This struggle for liberation thus calls for the *homo spiritus/shamanicus* to engage in the fourfold activities of God's Creative Spirit:

i) suffusing the *cosmos* and *anthropos* with God's sacred presence and power so that humankind would relate to God's creation with reverence and sensitivity;

ii) sacralizing the *cosmos* and *anthropos* through the power of the spirit-world especially through ritual celebrations so that everything and everyone is made sacred;

iii) sensitizing the rest of humankind to the need for developing and globalizing mindfulness of the spirit-world in order to actualize and harness its spirit power for the concerted action against the global cartels at the local, regional, and global levels; and

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Revolution in 50 Countries (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010). Richard Freeman states that these cartels—Cargill, Continental, Louis Dreyfus, Bunge and Born, André, and Archer Daniels Midland/Töpfer—exercise "complete domination over world cereals and grains supplies, from wheat to corn and oats, from barley to sorghum and rye," including "meat, dairy, edible oils and fats, fruits and vegetables, sugar, and all forms of spices," and they have "moved into hoarding, increasing [their] food and raw materials holdings." Freeman warns, furthermore, that "the Anglo-Dutch-Swiss cartel is playing for high stakes—the ability to constrain the supply of raw materials, and above all, food, to turn back the clock of history, and reduce mankind from the 5.6 billion population it currently enjoys to the state of a few hundred million semi-literate souls scratching out a bare existence." Freeman boldly advocates that such an assault "cannot be fought timidly [that the] full truth about the food cartel must be known." Freeman's boldness resonates with Dean Henderson's remark: "The demonic City of London *Illuminati* banksters may have unlimited time and money.… The human spirit has unlimited potential. We are much closer to the beginning of this story than to the end." See Richard Freeman, "The Windsors' Global Food Cartel: Instrument for Starvation," *Executive Intelligence Review* 22:49 (1995): 16–24 and Dean Henderson, "An Economic Corpse: Ukraine Falls Under Fascist Bankster Thumb," *21st Century Wire* (March 13, 2014). Available at https://21stcenturywire.com/2014/03/13/an-economic-corpse-ukraine-falls-under-fascist-bankster-thumb/.

iv) sustaining the *cosmos* and *anthropos* with the sacred presence and power of the spirit-world so that creation manifests the eternal glory and splendor of God's Creative Spirit.

Conclusion

This theological reflection on my "dialogue of life" with the religio-cultural traditions of indigenous peoples is more than just a verbal and academic engagement. It is an "embodied dialogue" between humans who are body-and-spirit, who live in a web of relations which encompasses the spirit-world. The initiated or "discipled" *homo spiritus/shaminicus* exercises the capacity to access and actualize the sacred power of the spirit-world in the various instances and places of contestation with the super/supra hegemons of the world. This liberative struggle, undertaken with and for the marginalized indigenous communities, is facilitated by the fourfold activities of God's Creative Spirit through the *homo spiritus/shamanicus* so that God and God's reign pervade in creation. In this way, the "dialogue of life" that embraces the spirit-world brings about the total sacralization of creation so that God is in all, through all, and all in all.

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