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BOOK REVIEW

The Paschal Mystery and Divine Compassion By Antonio V. Romualdez
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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Ramon L. Bautista, S.J., "Discernment of Spirits in *The Shepherd of Hermas* and Origen," explores the subject of discernment of spirits in the writings of two influential patristic writers of the second and third centuries AD. Bautista's research into the early Christian sources provides the groundwork for a historical and systematic study on how to judge spiritual agents for their moral influence on human decision or action. The essay provides an invaluable contribution to spiritual theology, particularly in Catholic and Orthodox traditions that hold in high esteem the insights of the early Church Fathers.

Getting a cue from the seminal works of Michel de Certeau,[1] Jefferson M. Chua, "Travelling in the Secular Waste Land: de Certeau and the Irruptions of the Mystical," explores how mystical discourse can help people navigate the rough seas of divergent faith-modalities in the postmodern age or the arid terrain of a secular world where faith has withered. Chua finds "two elements in mystic utterance—excess and exile—that showed both 1) their context of loss and degradation but also 2) an establishment of a space where an encounter with the Divine reorders the economies of knowledge and faith" (73). In this way the language of mysticism

[1]Michel de Certeau, "Mystic Speech," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 80–100; also *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

opens up a space for the transcendent to break forth into the secular sphere.

James H. Kroeger, M.M., "New Evangelization Today: Exploring Key Themes and Asian Links," aims at "exploring some of the defining traits that characterize the 'new evangelization'" (78). After a discussion of evangelization in general, ten characteristics of the "new evangelization" are identified: 1) the centrality of Christ; 2) ecumenism; 3) interreligious dialogue; 4) religious freedom; 5) evangelization—a multifaceted process; 6) social teaching; 7) evangelization of cultures; 8) social communication; 9) responsibility of all Christians; and 10) the role of the Holy Spirit. The author draws on the insights of several experts to present and describe these topics. He also shows their linkages to "three pivotal anchors": the Second Vatican Council, the recent popes, and the Church in Asia (78).

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J., "The Parable of the Heifer in Hosea 10:11–13," interprets Hosea 10:11–13 as a story rather than just an extended agricultural metaphor without a plot. The farming scene in Hos. 10:11–13 is framed by depictions of violence and atrocities in Hos. 10:9–10 and 14. The connection between the two contrasting scenes—agriculture and war—is often vaguely and tenuously explained. At best, the heifer (*ʿeglāh*) is regarded as a veiled polemic against the bull images, disparagingly called "calves" (*ʿeglōṯ*), of Bethel (Hos. 10:5; cf. 1 Kgs. 12:28–30, 32) and Samaria (Hos. 8:5–6; cf. 13:2). The author demonstrates that reading the text as a parable, a poetic narrative with a storyline, is better able to elucidate the prophet's anti-war rhetoric.

Miriam R. Alejandrino, O.S.B., "Paul: A Misogynist?," examines various biblical texts to determine Paul's attitude towards women. She explains that such texts as 1 Cor. 7; 11:2–16; Col. 3:18–4:1; Eph. 5:21–6:9; 1 Tim. 2:8–15; and Titus 2:1–10, which seem to depreciate the role of women in the family and the early Christian community, need to be interpreted within the historical

and socio-cultural contexts, norms, and conventions of the time. She writes:

> ... we see how the early Church adapted to the prevailing customs, traditions, and social norms at that time while affirming the new teaching brought about by Christ as interpreted by Paul. With the changing attitude toward women today, these passages must not be used to justify subordination or oppression of women. More than anything else, we have to seek the mind of Christ as we try to interpret these texts. (137)

James McTavish, F.M.V.D., "A Pastoral Question on IVF and Embryo Adoption," explains the moral issues involved in IVF (*in vitro* fertilization) and the reasons why the Church regards it as unethical and contrary to her teachings. In addition, McTavish discusses the morality of "embryo adoption" which is an option proposed to "rescue" the spare embryos which otherwise would be discarded. While some consider it a quasi-heroic act to save life, others regard it as a form of cooperation with the unethical practice of IVF. So far the Church has not made a definitive stand on the question of "embryo adoption."

Included in this issue of *Landas* is a book review of Antonio V. Romualdez's *The Paschal Mystery and Divine Compassion* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2014) by Cory O. Villafania.

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.

Landas 28:2 (2014) 1–43

DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS IN *THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS* AND ORIGEN

Ramon L. Bautista, S.J.

1. What is this *Shepherd of Hermas* and what is its main contribution to discernment of spirits?

Some contemporary authors make special mention of *The Shepherd of Hermas* (c. 90–140 AD) as one of the most significant works on the subject of discernment in the early Church. One recent writer even holds that as an early spiritual treatise, composed in Rome sometime during the middle of the second century, this work "formulated the essential rules for the discernment of spirits."[1] Another author says that in this opus of Hermas, we can see "the first Christian formulation of the rules for the discernment of spirits."[2]

The Shepherd of Hermas is a Christian apocalyptic work. It urges believers of its time to give themselves to conversion and, specifically

[1]Gustave Bardy, "The Patristic Period," in Jacques Guillet, et al., *Discernment of Spirits*, trans. Innocentia Richards (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1970), 55. Bardy even adds that "[soon after], the advice from Hermas [on discernment] became traditional, even in the manner in which it was expressed" (55).

[2]Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "Angels Black and White: Loyola's Spiritual Discernment in Historical Perspective," *Theological Studies* 44 (1983): 245.

those who considered themselves as "grave sinners" to take on this "second chance" repentance in the light of an impending persecution and the second coming of the Lord, which they were expecting then would happen soon.[3] It is a collection of revelations made to a man named "Hermas" by an angel in the guise of a shepherd (5th vision). Hermas, the author, remains unknown, though there has been much speculation regarding his real identity. From the work itself, we can know that he was a freed Christian slave who probably was of Jewish origin. Sincere repentance, truthful and moral living, and the overall situation of the early Church are the main themes that he underscores.

The entire treatise is divided into three sections: i) the five visions, ii) the twelve mandates (or commandments), and iii) the ten parables (or similitudes). As a Christian writing, it was highly esteemed in the early Church, and for a time it was quoted often and even considered as canonical Scripture by some of the early Church fathers like Irenaeus. However, it does contain some details that fail to agree with the rest of Scripture.[4] Even so, due to the high regard and strong authority it enjoyed in the early Church, this document has gained a special place in the history of Christian literature and spirituality.

It is in the second part (mandates) of *The Shepherd of Hermas* where the matter of discernment is presented more explicitly. In mandate no. 6, the angel-shepherd (also known as the "angel of repentance") plainly instructs Hermas that "there are two spirits with [a person],

[3]Some scholars believe that during this time there was a rigorist tradition in the Church that went against any form of forgiveness or reconciliation, particularly for believers excommunicated for very grievous sins (like apostasy) after baptism. It is in this context that the term "second chance" is used. See M. H. Shepherd, Jr., "Hermas, Shepherd of," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 583–584. See also mandate no. 4 in *The Shepherd of Hermas*.

[4]For example, the Holy Spirit is identified wrongly as "Son of God" (9th parable or similitude, Ch 1). From this detail, we can see that the Trinitarian nature of God was not yet that clear as a Christian doctrine at that point in time.

one of righteousness and one of wickedness."[5] What follows right after this statement of the angel is Hermas' question which is of enormous practical value, since it is one inevitable and vital question that all discerners have to ask.

Hermas asks: "How shall I recognize them [the spirit of righteousness and the spirit of wickedness], seeing that both spirits dwell with me?" The angel then responds by pointing out some of the most primary identifying marks of each of the spirits. He says that it is by being attentive to these marks and understanding them that we are able to distinguish the spirit of righteousness from the spirit of wickedness.

The angel describes the righteous spirit as "sensitive, tender, modest, gentle and tranquil." As a good spirit, it can enter our hearts and stir them, placing into our minds thoughts "of righteousness, of purity, of holiness, and of contentment, of righteous deeds and of glorious virtues."

On the other hand, the wicked spirit is regarded as "quick tempered, bitter and senseless," drawn to do evil works. As a bad spirit, it too can enter our hearts and stir them, placing into our minds "angry or bitter thoughts." In addition, the spirit of wickedness can awaken also in us evil and dangerous desires, such as the "desire for much [worldly] activity, for extravagant kinds of food, for drinking bouts and for various luxuries, the desire for women [or men], greed, haughtiness, boastfulness."[6]

The entire 6th mandate ends with the warning from the angel-shepherd that, after recognizing these two kinds of spirits, we should go out of our way to trust and follow the righteous spirit. Conversely,

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[5]For the text of *The Shepherd of Hermas*, see www.AnabaptistChurch.org/Shepherd_of_Hermas.htm (accessed September 19, 2012). The translations by J. B. Lightfoot and Roberts-Donaldson are also available online at www.earlychristianwritings.com/shepherd.html.

[6]Like in mandate no. 6, lists of "evil desires" can also be seen in mandate nos. 8, 11, and 12.

we need to go against the wicked spirit and part ways with it so that we will not be tempted to do its sinful works.

Looking at the section on mandates alone and its treatment of discernment as part of the theme of true repentance and moral living, we can see how *The Shepherd of Hermas* has provided the most basic elements of a doctrine on the discernment of spirits. Without contradicting the Bible on this matter, especially the NT, the author supplements what we find in the Gospels and in the epistles. Curiously enough, one significant difference between this work of Hermas and the NT on discernment is on how we can identify more precisely which spirit is at work in us. While the NT, especially the epistles, places great emphasis on our *loving relationship with Christ*, plus the role of our *virtues* and *vices*, *The Shepherd of Hermas* adopts these but at the same time takes a step further by including more explicitly the role of our *thoughts* and *affections*, especially the different *desires* of our hearts when sifting the spirits. It is this particular emphasis apparent in Hermas that makes his discussion on the theme of discernment of spirits original and novel. To top it off, his utilization of certain images and analogies also helps clarify some of the principles of discernment that he sets forth.

At the risk of being a bit repetitive, we can summarize these fundamental elements of Hermas on discernment of spirits as follows:

1. There are two kinds of opposing spirits: the spirit of righteousness and the spirit of wickedness (mandate no. 6).

2. Each spirit has its own distinctive features. The spirit of righteousness is "delicate, tender, modest, gentle and tranquil" (and it is drawn to persons who are such), while the spirit of wickedness is "quick tempered, bitter and irrational" (and it is drawn to persons who are such) (mandate nos. 5–6).

3. These spirits can influence us, our choices, and our actions by entering into our hearts and stirring them, and putting *thoughts* and *desires* (including other feelings)

into our minds and hearts.[7] Thus, it is important to be attentive to these spirits and understand the kinds of thoughts, desires, and feelings that come to us.

4. We will know that the righteous spirit is at work in us when certain thoughts and/or feelings incline us toward righteousness, purity, holiness, contentment, and virtues (mandate no. 6).

5. Other marks of the spirit of righteousness are:

    - faith, fear of God, and self-control (mandate no. 1);
    - giving and serving in simplicity and sincerity, guilelessness, not engaging in evil speech, peace, reverence for God, and an overall experience of peace and joy (mandate no. 2);
    - truthfulness (mandate no. 3);
    - chastity, faithfulness in marriage, forgiving heart, sense of healing, repentance, understanding of sinful deeds, disturbance and torment due to sin, and humility (mandate no. 4);
    - patience (especially in long suffering), meekness, calmness, absence of bitterness, freedom from the cares of the world, and the desire to glorify God at all times (mandate no. 5);
    - temperance and self-restraint from doing evil, bearing no grudge, hospitality, and generosity in

[7]Hermas seems to be quite ambivalent regarding the issue of *freedom*. He insists that if we "cloth [ourselves] in the desire of righteousness" and "arm [ourselves] with the fear of the Lord," we can *resist* evil desires (mandate no. 12). Yet he also says that even if we are a person of faith, if we allow the desire of the spirit of wickedness to enter into our hearts, then we "must commit some sin." On the other hand, if we are a person of wickedness and the spirit of righteousness enters our hearts, then we "must of necessity do something good" (mandate no. 6).

doing good (like helping widows and orphans, encouraging those who are sick in soul, guiding back those who have fallen from the faith and restoring them to peace of mind, not oppressing debtors and the needy) (mandate no. 8);

- trust in God, asking and praying to God without ceasing, and disdain for the vanities of this life (mandate no. 9);
- cheerfulness and understanding of truth (mandate no. 10);
- not considering oneself as superior to anyone, and a sense of contentment with not so many wants (mandate no. 11);
- sense of justice, actual practice and living out of our good desires, and a sense of confidence that one can live a good life and keep God's commandments through his grace (mandate no. 12).

6. We will know that the wicked spirit is at work in us when certain thoughts and/or feelings incline us toward anger, bitterness, preoccupation with (worldly) activity, extravagance and luxury, drinking bouts, lust, greed, pride, and boastfulness (mandate no. 6).
7. Other marks of the spirit of wickedness are:
    - slander, having grudges, restlessness, lack of peace, and strife (mandate no. 2);
    - falsehood and lies (mandate no. 3);
    - impurity, adultery or fornication, and lawlessness (mandate no. 4);
    - impatience, double-mindedness, fickleness, harshness, and being blinded and bereft of any good intent (mandate no. 5);

- complacency with no fear of God and no guilt when doing wicked deeds (mandate no. 7);
- lack of temperance from evil deeds, hypocrisy, malice, backbiting, blasphemy, theft, false witness, deceit, food indulgence, vainglory, and remembrance of injuries (mandate no. 8);
- doubting God and his mercy, and weariness and wavering in faith (mandate no. 9);
- sadness and sorrow (mandate no. 10);
- idolatry, exalting oneself, superiority over others, self-seeking attitude, shamelessness, and love for money and vanities of this world (mandate no. 11);
- hardening of heart, covetousness, and little or no confidence to live a good life and keep God's commandments through his grace (mandate no. 12).

8. A prophet needs to be tested by his life and works to find out whether he is a true or false one. A true prophet is unworldly, peaceable, humble, and meek. He speaks only when and what God wants him to speak. A false prophet is proud, imprudent, and talkative. He prophesies mainly for money and for what he can gain for himself. He says to people what they want to hear from him (mandate no. 11).[8]

[8]The *Didache* (ca. 140 AD) is one other famous work during the early Church. As a spiritual treatise, it has its own list of "virtues and vices." It also tackles the theme of the "two ways" (the way of life *and* the way of death) and discusses this question of how to distinguish a true prophet from a false one. Here the author says, "But not everyone speaking in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he should have a lifestyle of the Lord's character." See *Didache*, trans. Tim Sauder, www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Didache-text.html (accessed September 20, 2012), XI.

9. Patience enables us to have power over all evil deeds. The Holy Spirit or the righteous spirit (drawn to patient hearts) and the devil or wicked spirit (drawn to angry hearts), being in discord with one another, find it difficult to dwell together for long in the same person. Like wormwood placed in a jar of honey, anger "pollutes" (and "chokes") the Holy Spirit. As a consequence, the Holy Spirit leaves persons "polluted" with anger and seeks out those who are more gentle and tranquil of heart. Thus, we need to guard ourselves against anger and learn true patience (mandate no. 5).

10. We need to fear the Lord and not the devil, because the power is in the Lord and not in the devil. What we also need to fear is the act of the devil (not his person) for his works are evil. Fear of the Lord will make us avoid evil and do good (mandate nos. 7 and 12).

11. Sorrow (or grief) is the sister of doubt and anger. It is the most wicked of all the spirits, destroying humans and "crushing out" the Holy Spirit (but sorrow due to a bad deed done can lead to repentance and salvation). As fine wine is different from vinegar, so is the Holy Spirit most incompatible with sorrow. We need to put on cheerfulness instead of sorrow, and if we do so we can set aside both doubt and anger in us (mandate no. 10).

12. We need to purify our desires for "the fear of God dwells in a pure desire." Also, we need to rid ourselves of all evil desires (which are the "daughters" of the devil) and clothe ourselves with good and holy ones. This way we can tame and control more easily those evil desires that come to us (mandate no. 12).

13. We need to trust and follow the spirit of righteousness. Doing this will allow us to live for God. On the other

> hand, we need to go against the spirit of wickedness. If not, we will not live for God and will experience death instead (mandate nos. 6 and 12).

2. Who is Origen? Why is he important in our historical overview of how discernment of spirits developed as a doctrine in the Church?

A good number of present-day writers, when making their (often short) historical presentation on discernment of spirits, take special note of Origen (c. 186–255 AD) and his significant contribution to the subject. For example, Joseph T. Lienhard asserts that "Origen has a distinctive place in his theological system for a doctrine of the discernment of spirits."[9] Hans Urs von Balthasar even devotes an entire section on discernment when presenting an anthology of Origen's writings.[10]

Most of what we know about Origen today can be drawn from Eusebius (c. 265–339), bishop of Caesarea, in his work *Ecclesiastical History* (Book 6). Origen was born of Christian parents in Alexandria, Egypt (then a center of Hellenistic learning). His father Leonides, a *Grammaticus* (i.e., a teacher of grammar and literature), personally tutored him, providing him with a high quality learning environment at home and exposing him to both Greek and the Scriptures. In 202, Leonides was martyred in the persecution of Emperor Septimus Severus (reigned 193–211), and the family's property was confiscated by the imperial authorities. As the eldest of seven sons, the responsibility of supporting the family fell to Origen. At the early age of eighteen, he became, like his father, a teacher of grammar and literature. In the

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[9]Joseph T. Lienhard, "On 'Discernment of Spirits' in the Early Church," *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): 505–529. See also Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian*, trans. Michael Barry (London: Cassell Publishers Ltd., 1990), esp. 166–175.

[10]See Hans Urs von Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire—A Thematic Anthology of His Writings*, trans. Robert J. Daly (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 218–232.

meantime, his local bishop, Demetrius (bishop from 189–232), decided to place him in charge of instructing catechumens, thus inducting him "into the lower orders of the paid ministers of the church."[11] For some years, most likely up to his early twenties, Origen continued on with his twin teaching duties. After some time, however, probably when the financial situation of his family had improved, he decided to let go of his being a *Grammaticus* so that he could devote himself more to his work as a catechist. But then a time came when he realized that, as a Christian, there truly was great value in what he was doing before as a teacher of secular culture, grammar, and literature. This was because the work included particularly the learning of philosophy. It thus dawned on him that philosophy can indeed be an excellent instrument for gaining "a deeper understanding of the underlying meaning of the revealed sacred texts and the creed that the apostles left to the church."[12] This motivated Origen to go back to his being a *Grammaticus*, and in order to deepen his knowledge of philosophy, he went out of his way to study under Ammonius Saccas (175–242), regarded as the father of Neoplatonic thought.[13] In the end, Origen continued his task

[11]John Anthony McGuckin, "The Life of Origen," in John Anthony McGuckin, ed.,*The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 4.

[12]David T. Runia, "Philosophy," in John Anthony McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 173.

[13]Neoplatonism "is closely associated with the name of Plotinus [205–270], its creator and most illustrious exponent." See Salvatore Lilla, "Neoplatonism," in Angelo Di Berardino, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 585–593. Plotinus also studied under Ammonius Saccas. Briefly, neoplatonism is a "philosophical school in the tradition of Plato, emphasizing mystical ascent to a vision of the divine; [it] significantly shaped early Christian thought." See "Neoplatonism," in Kelly Clark, Richard Lints, & James Smith, *101 Key Terms in Philosophy and Their Importance for Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 58–59. A short but excellent article on neoplatonism can be found in Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 612–614.

of preparing catechumens for Christian initiation while at the same time also building up a career as a philosopher-rhetorician.

As the young Origen gave himself more and more to the formal study of philosophy, his identity as a teacher of philosophy slowly emerged. He began to spend less and less time with his catechumens, eventually deciding to pass on his catechetical duties to a younger associate, Heraclas. In time, he started to regard himself as a professor or master of philosophy (a philosopher-*didaskalos*), but here "philosophy" referred more particularly to "Our Philosophy," "a term which had come to be increasingly used by Christian intellectuals to signify the entire Christian way of life."[14] As a dedicated *didaskalos*, he gave much of his attention to his more promising Christian students, without at all disregarding interested pagans and heretics.

Origen's reputation as a celebrated teacher (*didaskalos*) soon went beyond Alexandria. This allowed him to travel much and visit other cities outside of Egypt. In 212, he visited Rome. Jerome (c. 340–420) tells us that at that time Hippolytus (c. 170–236), the eminent Logos theologian, was giving lectures in the eternal city. Seeing Origen among those present in one of the lectures, Hippolytus called the attention of his audience to the esteemed presence of the well-known philosopher-*didaskalos* from Alexandria. Also, sometime shortly before the year 215, Origen went to Arabia (present day Jordan) on the personal invitation of the Roman governor there who was very much interested to "hear more of the Christian movement from one of its leading intellectuals."[15] This journey to Jordan likely brought him to the holy city of Jerusalem where he eventually met up with the local patriarch Alexander (d. 251), also recognized as a fine scholar and theologian. This initial meeting between the two later blossomed into a wonderful friendship, with Bishop Alexander becoming a most generous sponsor to Origen. Subsequently, too, Origen received an invitation to visit the city of Antioch from Empress Julia Mammaea (c. 182–235) herself, the mother of Emperor Alexander Severus (emperor from 222–235).

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[14]McGuckin, "The Life of Origen," 7.

[15]McGuckin, "The Life of Origen," 8.

She extended the invitation because she wanted to hear him speak in those debates which touched on various religious questions and which were organized in the city.

Another indication of Origen's growing reputation as a *didaskalos* and as an exceptional Christian scholar was his publications. No longer confining himself to tutoring an elite group of outstanding students, he started to write formally and exposed himself to a far wider audience. On the urging of a man named Ambrose—whom he had helped convert from Valentinianism (a widespread Gnostic sect in the second century founded by Valentinus) to orthodoxy and who was more than willing to extend much financial assistance to him—Origen ventured into this new career of writing. *On First Principles* (*De Principiis*) became his first grand work. Considered to be the first attempt at a "systematic theology"—i.e., at presenting the basic truths of the Christian faith in a coherent theological synthesis—this monumental work came to be the first major Christian effort at theological reflection, beginning with the canon of faith and drawing guidance from Scripture and reason. Given this approach of Origen to the Christian faith, we can see that he already had some notion of what development of dogma was all about, and that clarifying and expounding the creed of the Church with all its significance and implications was part and parcel of the responsibility and vocation of the theologian. As John Anthony McGuckin says, "[*On First Principles*] demonstrated one of Origen's basic principles, that the pursuit of reason (Logos) is a divine task."[16]

However, as Origen's fame as a *didaskalos* grew, so did the tension escalate between him and his patriarch, Bishop Demetrius. This tension became obvious when he went to visit Palestine around 216. Two leading churchmen of the place, Bishops Theoctistus of Caesarea and Alexander of Jerusalem, who admired Origen for his brilliance and widespread public esteem, requested him to give discourses in their respective dioceses. Whether they were more like academic discourses on the interpretation of the Scriptures or more like homilies

[16]McGuckin, "The Life of Origen," 8.

or sermons preached, the distinction between the two could be a subtle one. Whatever the case, it enraged Bishop Demetrius, who felt that it was most uncanonical and outrageous to allow a non-ordained person (no matter how talented he might be) to speak publicly on the Word of God, much more so in the very presence of bishops.

The tension between Origen and his local bishop reached its point of no return sometime in 231, when Origen was asked by the bishops of Achaia to go to Athens to engage in disputations with certain heretical groups. Starting from Alexandria and with the intention to reach Greece (his real destination), he took a long detour, passing through Caesarea in Palestine. He did this almost surely to visit his two bishop friends Theoctistus and Alexander, and it was this visit that provided occasion for that particular event that was to close the door once and for all on the relationship of Origen with his own bishop Demetrius—namely, his ordination to the priesthood. Soon enough, after Origen was ordained, Demetrius responded by assembling a synod of Egyptian bishops and priests of Alexandria (231). In this synod, they declared Origen unfit to teach in the church of Alexandria and concluded that he was to be excluded from their diocese since he was ordained not by its bishop but by the bishop of Caesarea. But Demetrius did not stop here. In a second synod, with some of his Egyptian bishops, he also proclaimed Origen "deposed from the priesthood."[17] For his part, Origen responded by seeking refuge in Caesarea where he was welcomed warmly by his Church friends in that district. To his advantage, the sentence of Demetrius against him was simply set aside there as well as in so many other places in the East. Finding a new home in Caesarea, Origen continued his writing and teaching. In addition, he also founded a new school and established an important library.

It was during the persecution of Decius (250) when Origen was imprisoned and tortured in order to force him to apostatize. Successfully making an esteemed Christian figure like him give up

[17]Henri Crouzel, "Origen," in Angelo Di Berardino, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* Vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 619–623.

the faith would have had far-reaching consequences then for the early Church and her suffering members. But Origen never wavered in his faith, and he was released upon the death of Decius in 251. However, because of his terrible experience in the dungeon, he was never able to recover his health. He survived for only a few more years and soon died in 254. He was 69 years of age.

Origen was a most prolific writer.[18] It is unfortunate, though, that many of his works have been lost. The ones that survived (of which more than three-fourths are expositions of Scripture) have come to us today only in fragments or in Latin translations. The good news, however, is that some of his other writings have been (re)discovered in the past few decades.

We can classify Origen's works into four basic kinds: *scriptural, ascetical, apologetical*, and *theological*.[19] Many today consider Origen, first and foremost, a biblical scholar; not a few hold that he was one of the first textual critics of the Bible. His major work on the Holy Scriptures was the *Hexapla* (the Greek term meaning "sixfold"). An *opus* on biblical criticism, the *Hexapla* contained six versions of the Jewish Scriptures that were presented in parallel columns, starting with the Hebrew text, followed by a Greek transliteration of it, and then four Greek versions.[20] Origen meticulously designed the parallel layout in

[18]Different persons have made different claims regarding the number of works of Origen. For example, Epiphanius of Salamis says that Origen produced more than 6,000 works. Pamphilus asserts that he had about 2,000 works. Jerome reports that it is only around 800. See J. D. Douglas, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (United Kingdom: The Paternoster Press, 1974), 733.

[19]Rev. Frederick Crombie, in his translation of *On First Principles*, classifies Origen's works into five: *exegetical, critical, apologetical, dogmatic*, and *practical*; they are available at http://christianbookshelf.org/origen/origen_de_principiis/index.html (accessed October 16, 2012).

[20]These four Greek versions included those of Aquila of Sinope (the most literal among them), Symmachus the Ebionite, Theodotion of Ephesus, and a revised version of the Septuagint. For some other books of the OT, like the Psalms and Proverbs, two or three other Greek versions were added by Origen.

order to show a word-for-word comparison of these different versions of the OT and assist the more serious readers to a more precise and truthful reading of the sacred books. His other writings on the Bible include his numerous *scholia* (brief explanations of certain passages) and commentaries and homilies based on the different books of both the OT and NT. For him, any passage from Sacred Scripture can be read on three levels: *literal*, *moral*, and *spiritual* (or *allegorical*).[21]

Taking on more "ascetical" and "apologetical" themes, Origen also produced works like the *Exhortation to Martyrdom* and *On Prayer*, both of which were well-received during his time. In addition to these, *Against Celsus* was his famous essay in defense of the Christian faith against pagan criticism. Here he addressed particularly Celsus, one formidable opponent of Christianity during this period. It was around the year 230 when Origen went out of his way to compose his *magnum opus*, *On First Principles*.[22] With all these scholarly works of his, it is not surprising at all why Origen has been looked upon by more recent Patristic scholars as "one of the most influential of the early church fathers" (Gary Wayne Barkley) and also as "one of the greatest teachers ever known in Christendom" (George Leonard Prestige).[23]

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[21]Origen's homily on the Parable of the Good Samaritan is one clear example of an allegorical (or spiritual) reading of the Bible. Here he considers the Good Samaritan as Christ, the robbers as the devil and his minions, Jerusalem as paradise or heaven, Jericho as the world, and so on. See Riemer Roukema, "The Good Samaritan in Ancient Christianity," *Vigiliae Christianae* 58:1 (February 2004): 56–97.

[22]*On First Principles* contains four books. *Book I* deals mainly with the Trinity and creation, *Book II* with the physical world and the fall and redemption of humanity, *Book III* with the forces of good and evil and the freedom of the will, and *Book IV* with the interpretation of the Bible, including the literal, moral, and spiritual/allegorical reading of the Scriptures. All citations from here onwards that begin simply with "Book" refer to *On First Principles*.

[23]Gary Wayne Barkley, *The Fathers of the Church: Origen, Homilies of Leviticus* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1990), 4; George Leonard Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics* (London: SPCK, 1968), 52.

It is in *On First Principles* where we see Origen discussing at length the topic of discernment (esp. in Book III, Chs. 2–4). In one other writing,[24] he lays the foundation for the need of a sifting of spirits:

> Two angels attend each human being. One is an angel of justice, the other an angel of iniquity. If good thoughts are present in our hearts and justice springs up in our souls, the angel of the Lord is undoubtedly speaking to us. But, if evil thoughts turn over in our hearts, the devil's angel is speaking to us.[25]

He goes back to this notion frequently enough. In another homily,[26] he writes: "two angels are present to every man: a wicked angel, who exhorts him to wrongdoing; and a good angel, who urges him to do everything good."[27] Without question, this is a teaching he had received from tradition. In his major composition *On First Principles*, he explicitly points to two earlier works, namely, *The Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*.[28] As he says:

> [The] book of the Shepherd [i.e., Hermas (mandate no. 6, 2)] asserts the same thing, teaching that two angels attend each human being and saying that whenever good thoughts arise in our heart they are suggested by the good angel, and whenever thoughts of the opposite kind they are the inspiration of the bad angel. The same thing, too, is asserted by Barnabas in his epistle [Epistle of Barnabas, 18], where he says that there are two ways, one of light and the other of darkness, over which preside certain angels, the angels of God over the way of light and Satan's angels over the way of darkness.[29]

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[24]Homily 12 on Lk. 2:8–11.

[25]*Origen: Homilies on Luke,* trans. Joseph Lienhard, The Fathers of the Church Vol. 94 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 49–50.

[26]Homily 35 on Lk. 12:57–59.

[27]*Origen: Homilies on Luke*, 143.

[28]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 4.

[29]See *Origen: On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), 217. For Origen, there are four major kinds of *rational*

From this teaching of Origen about the two kinds of angels or spirits and his warning against its misinterpretation, we learn that the thoughts and inner movements we experience can come from different sources. These sources are 1) ourselves, i.e., our "natural" impulses and instincts or "natural desires" and "natural emotions";[30] 2) from the devil and his angels; and 3) from the good angels. Later on, however, Origen gives a more complete enumeration of the sources of the "thoughts which proceed out of the heart" (Mt. 15:18–19; Mk. 7:21). He says that they "proceed sometimes from *ourselves*, sometimes are aroused by the *opposing powers*, and occasionally also are implanted in us by *God* or by the *holy angels*."[31]

Given such diverse influences from various sources, it is only through "the gift of the discernment of spirits" (1 Cor. 12:10) that we are empowered "to put the spirits to a test to see if they belong to God" (1 Jn. 4:1).[32] And here lies precisely the true value of Origen with respect to discernment and its doctrinal development in the Church. For one, it is he who plainly adopts and employs the exact scriptural, Pauline expression "discernment of spirits" (1 Cor. 12:10) in his writings

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creatures, namely: the angels, the powers of wickedness, the animating spirits of the heavenly bodies (like the sun, moon, and stars), and human souls (see Book I, Ch. 5, nos. 1–3; Ch. 7, nos. 2–3). In *On First Principles* (Book I, Ch. 8, no. 1), he explains how this came about. He says that "before the aeons existed," all creatures were spirits (demons, human souls, and angels) and they were all pure. Possessing free will, the devil chose to resist God. All the other spiritual creatures followed, and so they too decided to turn away from God. With all these spirits originally having the same nature now going against the divine in varying ways, God responded by making "some of them demons, some angels and some men." Thus, in the end, each spiritual creature received the kind of recompense according to each one's individual sinning. See *Origen: On First Principles*, 67. See also Jean Danielou, *Origen*, trans. Walter Mitchell (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 214–215.

[30]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2.

[31]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 4 (italics mine).

[32]See excerpt from Origen's homily on Exodus 3, 1–2, in Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 548 (222–223).

(which other earlier and notable works like the *Didache*, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Epistle of Barnabas* somehow overlooked).[33] However, more than this, it is Origen who is one of the first Christian authors to tackle directly the actual *subjective* process of discernment itself. He does this by taking on the *discerner's* perspective and particularly touching more on the "what" and "how" of testing the *Two Ways* (i.e., the way of life and virtue *and* the way of death and evil) which are at the core of this gift of sifting the spirits.[34] This explains why one significant contribution of Origen to discernment is his marking out some of the most important *characteristics* of both the good and evil spirits and their primary *effects* in our souls. Examples of these chief effects in us would be our minds staying *calm* and our wills remaining *free* (as in the case of the good spirit) or our souls becoming *confused, disturbed*, and *sad* (as in the case of the evil spirit).[35]

In discussing this theme of discernment of spirits, one dominant metaphor Origen uses is that of a *spiritual battle*. Evidently, he borrows much from his favorite source, the Sacred Scripture. Utilizing biblical images like "armour" (Eph. 6:13),[36] or "enemies encamping" (Ps. 27),[37] or "fiery darts [or arrows]," or "shield of faith" (Eph. 6:16),[38] or "leader of our army [and soldiers]" (Judg. 7:3),[39] he underlines the point that

[33]Examples where we can see Origen using the term "discernment of spirits" (from 1 Cor. 12:10) would be in his homilies on Exodus III, 2 (see *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus,* trans. Ronald Heine [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982], 250); on Ezechiel 2, 2 (*Origen: Homilies 1–14 on Ezechiel*, trans. Thomas Scheck [New Jersey: Newman Press, 2010], 48); and on Luke 1, 1 (*Origen: Homilies on Luke*, 5).

[34]See Lienhard, "On 'Discernment of Spirits' in the Early Church," 512.

[35]See Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, nos. 563 and 566 (226).

[36]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 1.

[37]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 5.

[38]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 4.

[39]Homily on Judges 9, 1.

"the interior life is a battle which the soul wages for God against the devil."[40] A great part of this spiritual warfare has to do with our very soul, our *anima* taking on more and more either the image of our Lord or the likeness of Satan himself.[41] But then, much more than just our own personal relationship with Christ and our own one-on-one fight against the Evil One, this spiritual battle is on a far larger scale. This is because it involves essentially this "great, cosmic battle which Christ our field marshal wages against the kingdom of darkness."[42] And the more we examine discernment from this vantage point of "cosmic battle," the more we will realize that what really is at stake here is our very salvation.[43]

At the heart of Origen's discussion on discernment is his notion of *free will*. For him, no matter how powerful the influence of these

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[40]Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 223.

[41]See Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 223–224 (esp. no. 554). This understanding of the growth of either Christ's or Satan's image and likeness in our souls can be seen in Origen's Homily 8 on Lk. 1:46–52. See *Origen: Homilies on Luke*, 33–36.

[42]Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 223. In another work (Homily on Joshua 15, 5), Origen writes,

> … there is not just one principality among the "contrary powers," but several, against which … all of us have to do battle. But I think that all these have a prince, one so to speak more prominent in evil and more accomplished in vice who, as the sole leader of all the princes, and as master of all this wicked warfare, makes war on the whole world. Meanwhile, each of them in his own way tries to entice us to particular individual sins.

Cf. Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 558 (225).

[43]Writing on the theme of *salvation*, Origen, in his Homily on Ps. 36, 5–7, declared, "Our salvation can never be more secure than when it is from the Lord. May he be my ground, he my house, he my mansion, he my repose, and may he be the place I dwell." Taken from Richard H. Schmidt, *God Seekers—20 Centuries of Christian Spiritualities* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 20.

spirits may be (either tempting us to do evil, as in the case of the Evil One, or moving us to do good, as in the case of God and his angels), the human person always has ample capability to do two things: 1) distinguish truthfully the good prompting from the wicked one (due to our "reasoning power"), and 2) choose freely our individual preferred alternative (due to our free will).[44] This "reasoning power" in us, which in itself is a *gift*, does not guarantee, however, that we always will choose the good option over the evil one. It is true, as Origen argues, that "we have it in our power, when the evil force begins to entice us to evil, to drive away the base suggestions and resist the wicked enticements and commit no guilty act whatsoever."[45] The difficulty though is that we do not always choose and act as we *ought*. Therefore, despite this "empowerment" (since it is a *gift* in the first place) and "free will," we are very often not able to overcome temptations that come to us frequently.[46] It is in this sense that our freedom is never absolute, and yet the choice to do good or evil is

[44]Book I, Preface, no. 5; Book III, Ch. 2, no. 3, par. 4; no. 4, par. 3. See also Book III, Ch. 3, no. 5, par. 2. For a discussion on Origen's understanding of this "power" in us, cf. Pamela Gebauer, "The Notion of Spiritual Discernment Found in the Writings of Origen, Antony of Egypt, and Ignatius of Loyola—A Comparative Study," M.A. Thesis (Concordia University), 10, available at http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/1316/1/MQ59266.pdf (accessed October 25, 2012).

[45]Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 564 (226). See also Book III, Ch. 2, no. 4. Origen refers to this "power" in us to drive away the devil and resist his enticements. Yet, at the same time, he also says that "there is a certain limit to the powers of human nature" and thus, "[if] left to itself, I do not think that human nature could do battle against [wicked] angels'" (Book III, Ch. 2, no. 5).

[46]In this regard, Origen says that

> … this power which is given us to enable us to conquer may be used, according to our faculty of free-will, either in a diligent manner, and then we prove victorious, or in a slothful manner, and then we are defeated. For if such a power were wholly given us as that we must by all means prove victorious, and never be defeated, what further reason for a struggle could remain to him who cannot be overcome? (Book III, Ch. 2, no. 3)

always before us. And learning to constantly choose virtue over sin, goodness over wickedness, already is a reliable indicator that we indeed are undergoing true reconciliation with Christ, and thus experiencing some genuine growth in our life in the Spirit. Still and all, in the end, it is our choice and our choice alone, and no one, not even God himself who is the source of all our blessings, can force us to do something against our own will.[47]

Due to some of Origen's teachings, particularly the ones on the pre-existence of the human soul (see footnote no. 17 above) and on his *apocatastasis* (i.e., salvation for all, including Satan himself), he was denounced by many Church leaders and theologians. This started within 200 years of his death, sometime at the end of the fourth century. However, some significant changes came in the mid-1900s in terms of the (re)interpretation many had of Origen's character and writings. This brought about growth in affection for him, especially both for his brilliance as a writer and for his spirituality. Today, he is widely recognized "as the first Christian exegetical giant, the first 'systematic' theologian, and the first ascetical-mystical theologian."[48] Yes, this is Origen of Alexandria, the Christian genius who had desired deeply "to be a man of the Church, not the founder of heresy."[49]

3. What practical lessons can we draw from Origen and his teaching on discernment of spirits?

Here I would like to focus on just *two* of Origen's important teachings on discernment: 1) his notion of *free will*, and 2) his understanding of the *evil spirits*, their ways of leading people into temptation, and how we can go against them.

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[47]See Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 602 (232). Origen's view of human freedom seems to be at variance with *The Shepherd of Hermas*. See Q. 9, footnote no. 7, above.

[48]See Harvey Egan, *Soundings in the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), 13.

[49]Homily 16 on Lk. 2:33–34.

Origen was a firm believer of human freedom. He held that neither Satan nor the Lord himself could coerce anyone to do anything against his or her own will. He was convinced that the human person does possess considerable freedom and "empowerment" to either drive away temptations coming from the evil spirit or to welcome inspirations coming from the good spirit.[50]

Regarding our freedom and power to drive away the temptations of the enemy, the crux of the matter evidently lies in our quality of *temperance* or *intemperance*. It is this virtue of temperance or the lack of it that will largely determine the quality of spiritual life we will be having.

In presenting the matter of temperance or intemperance and human free will, Origen takes up the subject of the devil and his minions, and the fact that they are engaged in this struggle with us human beings. As our enemies, these evil spirits provoke and incite us to sin.[51] However, Origen warns that the tradition concerning the bad and good angels and their influence on our hearts and thoughts should not lead us to hold, as "the simpler sort of believers in Christ … suppose[,] that all the sins that [humans] have committed come from the persistent influence of the contrary powers on the sinners' minds."[52] He explains that if

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[50]Here Origen states:

> It is possible for us, when an evil power has begun to urge us on to a deed of evil, to cast away the wicked suggestions and to resist the low enticements and to do absolutely nothing worthy of blame; and it is possible on the other hand when a divine power has urged us on to better things not to follow its guidance, since our faculty of free will is preserved to us in either case.

See *Origen: On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 2, no. 4, par. 3 (217). All the quotations here from *On First Principles* are taken from Butterworth's translation. Much of our discussion on this topic of *free will* is taken from *Origen: On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 2, nos. 2–4 (213–218).

[51]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 1, par. 1.

[52]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 1, par. 4.

we ponder more carefully about the truthfulness of this claim, we will see that this is not actually the case, "especially when we consider the acts which arise clearly from the necessities of our body."[53] For example, it would certainly *not* be valid to insist that "the devil is the cause of our being hungry or thirsty."[54] This is the case because our going hungry or thirsty simply proceeds "from a natural instinct" as this is how we have been created by God.[55] And "even if there were no impulse from the devil to urge [us] on," Origen doubted that we "could possibly employ such great self-control in partaking of food as absolutely never" to go "astray in the observance of … moderation in [our] food … not at any rate before [we] had learned this lesson by long practice and experience."[56] In other words, Origen is convinced that even without the devil tempting us, no human person can be completely temperate and always in control of his or her eating and drinking *until,* through God's grace, he or she has learned to become so by extensive practice and diligence.

Moving on from this point regarding food, Origen takes a step further. This time he raises the issue of *human sexual urges*, and asks, "what of that condition when an individual has attained to the age of puberty and this period has called forth the exciting movements of the natural heat?"[57] He replies by saying that truly the devil is *not* the cause "of that impulse which is naturally called forth at the time of maturity, that is, of the desire for sexual intercourse."[58] In asserting this, he once again inquires if

> in regard to foods and drink it would be possible for us to go wrong even apart from the instigation of the devil, if we happened to be

[53]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 1.

[54]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 1.

[55]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 2.

[56]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 2.

[57]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 1.

[58]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 1.

> caught at an intemperate or careless moment … are we to suppose that in regard to the sexual appetite and the natural desires we should not be affected in a similar way?[59]

Here his clear answer is "No." Surely, he says, we would be affected in a similar way. Origen adds that he believes "the same process of reasoning can be applied to the rest of the natural emotions, such as covetousness, anger, sorrow or any others whatever, which by the fault of intemperance exceed the limits of their natural measure."[60]

By speaking here of "the fault of intemperance," Origen is implying that in all these instances of human natural emotions we, because of *free will*, do possess the power "to offer … resistance to the first movements towards intemperance."[61] If we did not possess this power, then intemperance could not be considered a "fault" or an "offense" in the first place. From this situation, Origen concludes that just as in the case of actions "that are good, [where] the mere human will is by itself incapable of completing the good act—for this is in all cases brought to perfection by divine help,"[62] it is likewise in the case of bad actions where we draw "what we may call seeds of sin from those desires which are given to us naturally for our use."[63] However, when we use these natural desires or instincts *intemperately* and

> offer no resistance to the first movements towards intemperance, then [the devil,] seizing the opportunity of the first offense[,] incites and urges us on in every way … so that while we [humans] supply the occasions and beginnings of our sins, the hostile powers spread them far and wide and if possible endlessly.[64]

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[59]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 2.

[60]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 2.

[61]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 3.

[62]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 3.

[63]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 3.

[64]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 3.

Simply put, once we choose to become less cautious with these natural instincts of ours and start to indulge excessively in them, going beyond what is proper, it is then that the evil spirit begins to make his move and enter into our hearts and greatly afflict us with his temptations.[65] To illustrate his point further, Origen gives an example. He says that in this way

> the fall to avarice at last takes place, [people] first longing for a little money, and then increasingly in greed as the vice grows. Afterwards their passion is succeeded by a mental blindness and with the hostile powers stimulating and urging them on, money is now not only longed for but even seized by force or acquired by the shedding of human blood.[66]

Despite this action of the evil spirits inciting and urging us human beings to increase the excessive use of our natural desires, our situation is not hopeless. Origen refers to St. Paul who affirmed that "God is faithful, who will not suffer [us] to be tempted beyond [our] strength" (1 Cor. 10:13).[67] He explains that each of us "is tempted in proportion to the degree and possibilities of the strength [we possess]."[68] This does not mean though, he adds, that "the tempted [individual] ought therefore by all means to be victorious."[69] For it is *not* written that

> in temptation God will also make a way to escape from bearing it, but a way to escape that we may be able to bear it. And this possibility that

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[65]In Homily 27 on Numbers 33, Origen insists that there are some specific sins that we humans could not commit on our own, despite human frailty. For sure, the demon would have to be behind them. Examples of such sins are: adultery, excessive anger, "[plundering] someone else's goods," "[putting] a stumble block in the way of his mother's son." See *Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer and Selected Works*, The Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. & intro. Rowan Greer (New York: Paulist Press, Inc., 1979), 257.

[66]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 2, par. 3.

[67]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 3, par. 2.

[68]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 3, par. 2.

[69]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 3, par. 3.

> he has given us … is in our hand to utilize either vigorously or feebly. There is no doubt that in every temptation we are given a power of bearing it, if only we use to the full the power thus granted.[70]

And precisely here is where our *free will* (again) comes in. With the devil now tempting us, we can still freely choose. This time the choice is whether to fight such seductions in a diligent and persevering way *or* in a half-hearted and slothful way. Choosing the former over the latter then gives us a much greater chance, through grace, to be victorious over the devil and conquer sin in our lives. As Origen notes, "this strength … which is given to us in order that we may be able to conquer, we by the exercise of our *free will* either use diligently and conquer or feebly and suffer defeat."[71] Hence, in the end, Origen thinks that "it is clearly apparent that there are some offenses which we commit quite apart from the influence of the evil powers, and others which are carried to excessive and immoderate lengths at their instigation."[72]

Linking now Origen's notion of *free will* to our theme of discernment, one practical lesson plainly stands out, and it is this: to proactively pursue the values of moderation and balance in all things, learning to avoid intemperance or overindulgence in our lives and courageously standing up against temptations when they do come into our lives.

One impression we may get when reading Origen is that when it comes to discernment, almost everything seems to begin with our own sense of temperance or intemperance. In this way, given our natural desires, the more we decide to practice *temperance*, the more grace becomes operative in our lives, and the more we can choose virtue over sin, life over death. Conversely, the more we choose to practice *intemperance*, the more room we give the devil to prowl in our hearts, and the more we become vulnerable to the opposing powers and allow evil to build on our natural appetites and already existing vices. Thus, the long and short of it all is this: we can be our worst enemy. To tame

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[70]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 3, par. 3.

[71]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 3, par. 4 (emphasis mine).

[72]Book III, Ch. 2, no. 3, par. 4.

this "enemy" in us, we need to know exactly when to say "enough is enough." This demands never going too far in all the things that we do. In case we do fall into intemperance, we can still choose to fight the Evil One, putting our foot down and trusting that the devil is only as strong as we make him to be. In the words of Origen:

> The enemy [the devil] would not grow strong against us, nor would [he] himself be able to do anything in us unless we gave him strength by our vices. [Satan] our enemy would be quite weak against us if we did not make him strong by sinning, and if he did not find through our sins a place to enter and take over.[73]

One image Origen uses to describe the Evil One is that of a *roaring lion*.[74] Like a ferocious beast, the devil "prowls and looks for someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). If not on a hunt, he walks with us tirelessly, "never [leaving] us alone in his search for an opportunity to trap us and bring us down."[75] As our adversary, he utilizes a *twofold mode of operation*. The *first mode* is what Origen refers to as "possession." When utilizing this mode, the devil takes "whole and entire possession of the [person's] mind, so that [he allows the person in his] power neither to understand nor to think."[76] When this happens, the person appears to "be demented and insane."[77] The *second mode* which is more common has to do with "wicked suggestions." Origen presents the classic example of Judas Iscariot who fell when he was induced by Satan to do evil.

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[73]Homily on Judges 4. Quoted from Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 551 (224).

[74]Book III, Ch. 3, no. 6, par. 1.

[75]Homily 35 on Lk. 12:57–59. Cf. Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire,* no. 565 (226). See also *Origen: Homilies on Luke*, 145.

[76]Book III, Ch. 3, no. 4, par. 2.

[77]Book III, Ch. 3, no. 4, par. 2. When explaining this mode of "possession," Origen adds this: "such as the men who are related in the Gospel to have been healed by the Savior" (Book III, Ch. 3, no. 4, par. 2). One Gospel example of this kind of "possession" can be seen in Lk. 8:26–39 (or in Mk. 5:1–20).

As John's Gospel tells us, "the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray [Christ]" (Jn. 13:2).[78]

We can identify from Origen at least *three ways* by which the devil carries out these "wicked suggestions," ungodly thoughts to lure us to sin: 1) by his *hidden presence*, 2) by *exaggerating*, and 3) by *deceiving*.

The way of *hidden presence* is not unrelated to *free will* which we discussed above. Here Origen uses the image of a serpent. He says that

> in the hearts of sinners where there are anguished places, since they have given room to the devil (Eph. 4:27) to enter, he does indeed enter … to lie hidden, as in a cave …. In this way … the unfortunate soul, which has this evil serpent occupying it, grows still with serpentine cold. It contracts and is compressed and is driven into extreme anguish.[79]

As we said earlier, the more *room* we give the devil to prowl in our hearts by way of our *intemperance* (or *negligence* or *vices* or *slothfulness*), the more vulnerable we become to his paralyzing influence. Evidently enough, our decision "to give [or not to give] room" to the evil spirit in our hearts seems to be a pivotal point in Origen's understanding of Satan and his style of tempting us.[80]

To use another related image of Origen, every time we *make room* for the bad spirit to lurk in us, we stupidly set ourselves up for an easy holdup.[81] The devil simply lies in wait for us to commit a dumb mistake.

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[78]Book III, Ch. 3, no. 4, par. 2.

[79]See *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1–5*, The Fathers of the Church Vol. 103, trans. Thomas Scheck (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 122. See also Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 583 (229).

[80]For examples in Origen's writings where he brings up this idea of *making* (or *not making*) *room* for the bad spirit to enter in us, see Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 551 (224 [Homily on Judges 4]), no. 583 (229 [from Commentary on Romans, Book 2, Ch. 6]), and no. 597 (231 [Homily on Numbers 6, 2]). See also *On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 3, no. 5.

[81]Book III, Ch. 3, no. 6, par. 1.

This bandit *cannot* launch an ambush unless we first make our false move. It is only when we make our anticipated blooper that he can carry out his planned assault. Like a merciless brigand, the devil waits with much patience and anticipation. Oftentimes he cannot act and attack unless we first provide him with some opening in our hearts in terms of some intemperance or excess. In the end, the most discreet response that we can make when the wicked spirit does apply this *mode of hidden presence* is always to keep our guard up and maximize our spiritual defenses. This can mean, for example, doing more prayerful and honest self-examination and going out of our way to understand well the nature of our vices—what they are, how they work, where we are weakest and most vulnerable in terms of temptations, and their usual unfolding patterns in us. By building up our spiritual defenses and not giving in to excess or negligence or sloth through grace, we are able somehow to effectively restrain the devil's attacks against us and not simply become easy prey against his wicked suggestions.

Exaggerating is the next way by which the devil makes "wicked suggestions." As in the first way (the way of *hidden presence*), the role of *intemperance* or overindulgence once again is given emphasis. This time, however, the concern is *not* about our own personal sin of intemperance in dealing with our own vices, natural appetites, or base passions. Here the main concern is about our human *emotions* and *affections* like grief, sadness, sorrow, and even repentance. Therefore, in this case, the one exaggerating is not us but the devil, for Origen believes that the wicked spirit can take these different feelings of ours and exaggerate them to the point of overwhelming us. Writing once on the themes of sinfulness and repentance, he gave this example:

> [the man] repented … and grieved for it "with a godly grief," such a grief as "[producing] a repentance that leads to salvation" (2 Cor. 7:9). But after he had become sad in this way, the devil … [tried] to exaggerate this sadness beyond measure so that the sadness itself would no longer be "godly" … and Satan could overwhelm him in excessive sorrow (2 Cor. 2:7).[82]

[82]Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 582 (228).

Cautioning us to be careful not to overindulge in our contrition and repentance for our sins, Origen also wrote that "it is not desirable that the grief of repentance towards God be active in everyone at all times … and it must be practiced with moderation and not excessively."[83] All in all, the main consideration here is to see that, indeed, the demon is a *master of exaggeration*, especially when it comes to our feelings of grief, sadness, sorrow, repentance, remorse, and the like. And the more we allow him to magnify these feelings in us, the more he can manipulate us and bring about utter discouragement and despair in our hearts.

Deceiving is the third and last way by which the devil carries out his "wicked suggestions." Linked to this style of deceiving (or lying or confusing) is the biblical image of the evil spirit who "disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Origen adopts this well-known Pauline metaphor for Satan. He says that the devil (who even tried to *deceive* Christ himself)[84] "fills the hearts of the sinners with a false light so that what is really passing and subject to decay might seem good and valuable."[85] In other words, by making people lose their truthful perspective of life's real meaning, the bad spirit makes *temporal* realities appear *eternal* and *absolute*, and *eternal* realities appear *temporal* and *relative*. As one who deceives, "the devil has opened the mouth of the man who speaks falsehood to speak falsehood."[86] Likewise, he opens the mouth of "those who 'speak iniquity against the Most High' (Ps. 72:8), 'who

[83]Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 585 (229). See also *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel of John, Books 13–32*, The Fathers of the Church Vol. 89, trans. Ronald Heine (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 297.

[84]See *Origen: Homilies on Luke*, 165.

[85]Homily on Judges 1, 1; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 562 (226). See also *Origen: Homilies on Judges*, The Fathers of the Church Vol. 119, trans. Elizabeth Ann DivelyLauro (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2010), 42–43.

[86]Homilies on Exodus III; *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, 249.

deny that [our] Lord Jesus Christ has come in the flesh' (1 Jn. 4:2; 2 Jn. 7), or 'who blaspheme the Holy Spirit' (Lk. 12:10; Mt. 12:31)."[87]

On top of all this, part of the devil's demonic manner of deceiving or confusing is setting up different snares to trap or overwhelm people. These snares can come in different forms, ranging from worldly luxury to our lust, our vices and passions, our sadness, our ignorance, our arrogance, our hypocrisy, and the hardening of our hearts and others. On this issue concerning the "hardening of our hearts," Origen comments that it is "the ice of iniquity" that makes our hearts hard, and, as a result, we "no longer [accept] the seal of the divine image."[88] In the end, the evil spirit has a trap on hand, ready for use, for any and every type of soul he encounters, whether it is with highly evil and immoral individuals, or with plainly good and sincere ones. Seeing this to be consistent with his own personal experience of the reality of evil, Origen makes this remark: "The devil fights with different kinds of snares to bring a poor human being to ruin; he gives a good life to evil people to deceive observers, and stirs up a bad conscience in good people."[89]

To conclude, for Origen, when it comes to our interior life and discernment of good and bad spirits, almost everything, it seems, starts with our own practice of temperance *or* intemperance. When going against the devil and his temptations, we must realize that we are not as weak as we may imagine ourselves to be. As Origen insisted, "the ability to choose good or evil is within the immediate reach of all."[90] Therefore, in this battle with the opposing powers, we must always have confidence

[87]Homilies on Exodus III; *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, 249–250.

[88]See Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 588 (230). See also *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1–5*, 106.

[89]Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 406a (164).

[90]Book II, Ch. 6, no. 5, par. 1.

that, with our Lord and his grace always available to us, "there really is nothing difficult, nothing arduous or impossible in it."[91]

4. According to Origen, what are some indicators of the different effects and fruits of these spirits in us?

These *indicators* (or signs) are what we really need to look for, name, examine, interpret, and discern. Aside from the eventual *direction* and *end* of our interior experiences, it is these actual *effects* and *fruits* of these spirits in us that are the "raw materials" when discerning. Without these three (i.e., *direction*, *end/terminus*, and *interior effects* in us), no genuine discernment is possible. Without our truthful sensing and reading of them, our discernment may be limited simply to guesswork. However, with their emergence and manifestations in us and/or in others, and with our extra sensitivity to them, the difficult art of discernment can be made less complicated.

For Origen, the following are some of the leading *indicators* (or criteria) that will help us determine what kind of spirits are present and at work in our souls:[92]

[91]Homily on Judges 9, 1; *Origen: Homilies on Judges*, 113.

[92]Though Origen wrote on discernment of spirits, he never really had an ordered, systematic presentation of his "rules for discernment." In making our list of *indicators* here, we depend much on Hans Urs von Balthasar's section on "The Nature and Discernment of Spirits" where he collects various texts from Origen's writings related to the theme of discernment. See Balthasar's work, *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 225–232 (italics here in Q.4 are mine).

God and his angels	The Evil One and his devils
when there are "*good thoughts* in our heart and the *spirit of justice* is flourishing"[93]	when "*evil thoughts* are harbored in our heart"[94]
when our soul is "'*enlightened with*' *Christ,* '*the true light*' [together with his *Gospel values*] … which never goes out";[95] or when, like a traveler sailing on a ship in a favorable wind, we "pass by in the senses all these visible things because they are *temporal,* and [we] gaze upon those which are *eternal*"[96]	when our soul is "*illumined* by a *temporal* and *extinguishable light* … [filling our hearts] with a *false light* so that what [are] really *passing* and subject to *decay* … *seem good* and *valuable*"[97]
when we enjoy "the sun of *righteousness*" and have "some spiritual days … illumined by the brilliance of *truth* and lamp of *wisdom*"[98]	when we feel surrounded by *darkness* and *hidden by walls*; when *impure desires* enter our hearts and *disturb* us[99]

[93]Homily on Luke 12, 4; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 561 (226).

[94]Homily on Luke 12, 4; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 561 (226).

[95]Homily on Judges 1, 1; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 562 (226).

[96]Homily on Ps. 36, 5, 5; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 576 (228).

[97]Homily on Judges 1, 1; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 562 (226).

[98]Homily on Joshua 16, 1; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 579 (228).

[99]Commentary on the Psalms 118, 55; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 577 (228).

when we remain *open* and *not closed* off and *do not allow our passions* to impede our sight, allowing God to *illumine* us to a *knowledge of spiritual things*[100]	
when the soul experiences *delight*, and has this *fullness of peace*, i.e., "the *quiet* of the soul together with its vision into *the true nature of things*"[101]	
when in the depths of our hearts "*calmness*, *serenity*, and *peace* bring forth their fruit";[102] or there is a great *calm* in our hearts, like the calm which followed Christ's command of the wind and sea and which enabled the sailors to reach the shore toward which they were pressing[103]	when our soul is "*confused by sins, vices, sadness, anger, desires* and *greed*"[104]

[100]Commentary on the Psalms 4, 7; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 596 (230).

[101]Commentary on the Psalms, fragments 36, 11; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 573 (227).

[102]Homilies on Ezechiel 15, 2; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 563 (226).

[103]Commentary on the Psalms 88, 13; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 575 (227).

[104]Homilies on Ezechiel 15, 2; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 563 (226).

when one is "*moved* and *called* to *good things* and *inspired* to *heavenly* or *divine things* … in such a way, of course, that it remains up to the person's free will and judgment whether to follow or not to follow." And "when it *suffers not the least disturbance or sadness of spirit* from what is being breathed into it."[105]	when our heart "has touched the *vice of concupiscence* and [our] soul has become *impure* … *lusting* after [someone] or by being *greedy* for *money* or by any other *sin of desire*"[106]
when we possess a *truthful* perspective of our real ultimate end, having *no sense* of *alarm* and *not driven to confusion* or *doubt* despite the upheavals we experience; when we are *not upset*, but more *settled down* and *established in peace* and are *without fear* knowing that "we can move to the peaceful end that lies beyond all this"[107]	when we possess a too *narrow perspective of life*, easily *alarmed* and driven to *confusion* or *doubt* due to the upheavals that come our way; when we are *upset* and *fearful*, *lacking in peace*, *insecure* if we can ever move to the peaceful end that we seek that lies beyond all this[108]

[105]*On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 2, no. 4, par. 3; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 566 (226).

[106]Homilies on Leviticus 3, 3; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 678 (250).

[107]Latin translation of the Commentary on Matthew 35; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 568 (227).

[108]Latin translation of the Commentary on Matthew 35; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 568 (227).

when our spirit "*still desires to be a disciple of the Holy Spirit*," even if it becomes "upset by the attacks of the flesh and [does] not know how or what to pray"; when the Holy Spirit "*himself utters groans which will teach our spirit to groan in order to reconcile itself with God*"[109]	
when we are led to *purify our* souls *from sin* so that there is *purity of heart* and *integrity of mind*, the *Holy Spirit will rest on us* and immediately set to work wherever he finds material he can work with[110]	when we *subject ourselves to sin* and we *give room to the evil spirit* in us by way of our *bad thoughts* and *evil desires,* the *Holy Spirit flees* from us[111]
	when human beings are *unpurified* they suffer the following contradictions (contradicting conditions): "they are *fearful* and *bold*, they practice *polytheism* and are *godless*, they *love without modesty* and they *hate immediately* afterwards"[112]

[109]Commentary on Romans Book 7, Ch. 6; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 574 (227).

[110]Homily on Numbers 6, 2; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 597 (231).

[111]Homily on Numbers 6, 2; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 597 (231).

[112]Commentary on the Psalms 65, 12; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 567 (226–227).

let "those who suffer tribulation and are still not reduced" be *confident* "that they are to be freed from their tribulation and led to the holy spaciousness of God" … as it is written: "You have given me room" (Ps. 4:1);[113] the soul *knows* that "God does not only dwell in this breadth of heart … he also walks therein"[114]	when we have fallen into sin and our hearts have become narrow, "the devil[,] because [we] have made room for him, indeed enters but not to dwell or to walk" in them because there is no room there, "but to lie hidden, as in a cave, for he is a serpent"[115]
when after doing evil we feel *sad* and *repent of the sin* and *grieve* "with a *godly grief*" that "*produces a repentance that leads to salvation*";[116] this *grief of repentance* is to be practiced (and expressed) "with *moderation* and *not* excessively"[117]	when after doing evil we feel *sad* and *repent* and *grieve* "with a godly grief"; but then after a while this *sadness* becomes *exaggerated* and eventually we are *overwhelmed* with *excessive sorrow* to the point that our *grieving* or *sadness* is *no longer* "*godly*"[118]

[113]Commentary on the Psalms 17, 19, 20; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 578 (228).

[114]Commentary on Romans Book 2, Ch. 6; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 583 (229).

[115]Commentary on Romans Book 2, Ch. 6; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 583 (229).

[116]Ancient Latin translation of the Commentary on Matthew 117; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 582 (228).

[117]Commentary on John 28, 4; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 585 (229).

[118]Ancient Latin translation of the Commentary on Matthew 117; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, nos. 582 and 583 (228–229). See also Commentary on John 28, 4.

when human nature "*senses the Lord* present and dwelling within it, *confident* of God's help, it will say: 'The Lord is my light and my salvation …'";[119] with these inner senses, we have what is described in Hebrews as "faculties trained by practice to *distinguish good from evil*" (Heb. 5:14)[120]	when we *lose the spiritual senses* in our soul and because of this we are *not able* to sense (i.e., see, hear, smell, taste, touch) God and his Word[121]
when the Lord teaches us the grace of *discernment of spirits* (1 Cor. 12:9–10), and "testing all things [we] hold on to what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21); when we are able to distinguish the *good spirits* from the *wicked ones,* like "well-trained money-changers" who are able to tell which money or silver is "counterfeit" and which one is "genuine"[122]	

[119]*On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 2, no. 5, par. 3; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 592 (230).

[120]Ancient Latin translation of the Commentary on Matthew 6; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, nos. 542 and 547 (221).

[121]Commentary on Romans, Book 4, Ch. 5; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 546 (221).

[122]Homily on Leviticus 3. Cf. *Origen: Homilies on Leviticus*, Fathers of the Church Vol. 83, trans. Gary Wayne Barkley (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 68.

when "the soul … [is] dominated by the flesh … it sometimes becomes as it were so *surfeited* and *satiated* and *wearied by the awful burdens of luxury* and *lust* that it can more easily and quickly be converted from material filth to *spiritual grace* and *a desire for heavenly things*"[123]	when the soul is not dominated by the flesh and "[remains] in the control of its own will," in this kind of condition the soul is "*neither hot nor cold*" (Rev. 3:15) but is "stuck in a kind of *tepid* middle state in which it could *find conversion to be a slow* and *quite difficult process*"[124]
when we *hope* in no human being (though they seem to be friends of ours), but in our Lord, Jesus Christ, "to whom is the glory and the power for the ages of ages"[125]	when we are driven "to *excess of anger* or *sorrow*, or to the last pitch of *despair*"; or when we are "*forced*, when *fatigued* and *overcome by any annoyances*, to make *complaints* against God, as one who does not administer human life justly and equitably; the consequence of which is, that *our faith may be weakened*, or *our hopes disappointed*, or we may be compelled to *give up the truth of our opinions*, or be led to *entertain irreligious sentiments regarding God*"[126]

[123]*On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 4, no. 3, par. 1; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 587 (229–230).

[124]*On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 4, no. 3, par. 1; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 587 (229–230).

[125]Homily on Jeremiah 15, 6; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 352 (145).

[126]*On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 2, no. 6, par. 1. Cf. also Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 582 (228).

"when our heart is *not hardened*, it is made to rise like incense before the Lord";[127] when our soul "*magnifies* the Lord through the greatness of its life and spirit" and we *take on the image of Christ*, the image of the Word, the images of *wisdom, justice,* and other *virtues*[128]	"A 'hard heart' (Rom. 2:5) seems to be spoken of in scripture when the human mind, like wax, *hardened by the ice of iniquity, no longer accepts the seal* of the *divine image*"[129]
when our spirits "burn with an unspeakable *longing to know* the why and wherefore of the works of God which we see"; when we have this *longing*, this *love* and "*desire to know God's truth* and the *causes of things*";[130] when our hearts are *enkindled* and "*ignited* to *faith*, *warmed* to *love* and *fired up* to *mercy*";[131] "when something said by the Lord sets [us] on *fire* so that [we] become *a lover of wisdom* because of it and *burn with eagerness for all that is beautiful*"[132]	when our soul is *unhappy* because the "fire of faith is *extinguished* [and the] warmth of love is *cooling*";[133] when we have feelings of "*listlessness … irritation and desire*, a *dissatisfaction* with the present and *a longing for what is not there*"; "when *drowsiness* prevails because of our spirit's *neglect of the* virtues and of the *knowledge of God*"; when our soul is *asleep* due to its "voluntary separation … from real life"[134]

[127]Homily on Jeremiah 18, 10; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 591 (230).

[128]Homily on Luke 8; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 554 (224).

[129]Commentary on Romans Book 2, Ch. 4; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 588 (230).

[130]*On First Principles*, Book II, Ch. 11, no. 4, par. 1; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 13 (37).

[131]Homily on Leviticus 9, 9; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 814 (292).

[132]Commentary on the Psalms 104, 19; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 187 (95).

[133]Homily on Leviticus 9, 9; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 814 (292).

[134]Commentary on the Psalms 118, 28; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 570 (227).

when our "soul has *united itself with the Word of God*," *not doubting* that it will "have enemies and that the friends it used to have will be turned into enemies which includes the contrary powers and the spirits of evil"[135]	when our souls *pull back* and *separate themselves from the Word of God* and as a result we are *not enkindled* and *fired up* by the words of the Holy Spirit[136]
when the soul is moved to "*put aside all arrogance* and put on the *humility of Christ*"[137]	when I am drawn to "the *sin of the devil* … the sin greater than all others," the sin of *haughtiness, pride, arrogance, built on wealth, rank,* and *worldly glory*[138]
when we are *not afraid* to "suffer the bitterness of this life in various temptations, knowing that in the end this bitterness gains the *sweetness of salvation* for our soul"[139]	when we forget that "the end of the sweetness found in physical pleasure yields *a bitter end* in the inferno of punishments" (as we see in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus [Lk. 16:19–31])[140]

[135]Homily on Joshua 11, 2; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 555 (224). Cf. also *Origen: Homilies on Joshua*, The Fathers of the Church Vol. 105, trans. Barbara Bruce, ed. Cynthia White (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 116.

[136]Homily on Leviticus 9, 9; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 814 (292).

[137]Homily on Joshua 5, 1; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 107 (66). Cf. also *Origen: Homilies on Joshua*, 59.

[138]Homily on Ezechiel 9, 2; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 406a (166); *Origen: Homilies 1–14 on Ezechiel*, 119.

[139]Homily on Numbers 27, 10.3; *Ancient Christian Texts, Homilies on Numbers*, trans. Thomas Scheck, ed. Christopher Hall (Westmont, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 177.

[140]Homily on Numbers 27, 10.3; *Ancient Christian Texts, Homilies on Numbers*, 177.

when we "[put] to death the deeds of the flesh, through the Spirit in the following manner": *love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, self-control*, and *chastity*; when we hold that "whoever puts to death the deeds of the flesh through the Spirit in this manner will live"[141]	when we live according to the flesh in the following manner: *hatred, "the sorrow of this world," dissension and discord, impatience*, *malice, ferocity, immoderation*, and *unchastity*; when we engage in these despite knowing that all of them lead us to the death of sin[142]
when we become "alive to God in Christ Jesus" (since "no one may live to God except in Christ Jesus") and thus become "alive to God in *wisdom*, in *peace*, in *righteousness*, in *sanctification*, all of which are Christ"[143]	when we allow our soul to die through sin (since "the soul which sins will die") and, as a consequence, we cannot be "alive to God [being] *without righteousness, without peace, without sanctification, without the rest of the virtues*"[144]

[141]Commentary on Romans Book 6, Ch. 14. See *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6–10*, Fathers of the Church Vol. 104, trans. Thomas Scheck (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 58–59, also 195, 274–276.

[142]Commentary on Romans Book 6, Ch. 14. See *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, *Books 6–10*, 58–59.

[143]Commentary on Romans Book 5, Ch. 10; *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, *Books 1–5*, 378.

[144]Commentary on Romans Book 5, Ch. 10; *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, *Books 1–5*, 378.

when we experience *divine consolation*, *not fearful* of our sufferings since we know that "just as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our *consolation abounds*" (2 Cor. 1:5);[145] when we feel we are with our "*God of [patience and] consolation* [and we] receive the *consolation* of the Spirit out of the Holy Scriptures through spiritual *understanding*"[146]	when the *divine fire dies out* in us;[147] when we allow the *sin, wickedness*, and *desolation* of the devil (who himself is a *desolation* and "whose dominion is *burdensome*") to rule our souls;[148] this way, he "[depraves] the soul, while it still thinks and understands, through *harmful suggestion* by means of different kinds of thoughts and *evil inducements*"[149]

[145]Commentary on Romans Vol. 2, Book 7, Ch. 4; *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6–10*, 67.

[146]Commentary on Romans Vol. 2, Book 10, Ch. 7; *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6–10*, 269.

[147]Homily on Genesis 15, 3; Balthasar, ed., *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, no. 40 (47).

[148]Commentary on Romans Book 5, Ch. 7; *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1–5*, 348–349.

[149]*On First Principles*, Book III, Ch. 3, no. 4, par. 2.

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TRAVELLING IN THE SECULAR WASTE LAND

de Certeau and the Irruptions of the Mystical

Jefferson M. Chua

> In this decayed hole among the mountains
> In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
> Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
> There is an empty chapel, only the wind's home.
> - T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*[1]

I. Introduction

Charles Taylor offers a somber sketch of our present spiritual and religious situation: "one is either thoroughly in this world, living by its premises, and then one cannot really believe in God; or one believes, and is in some sense living like a resident alien in modernity. Since we find ourselves more and more inducted into it, belief becomes harder and harder; the horizon of faith steadily recedes."[2] He points out that man's frames of knowing are altered at the dawn of modernity, closing off any relation or openness to the

[1]T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," in Frank Kermode, ed., *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (New York: Penguin Group, 2003), 68.

[2]Charles Taylor, "Closed World Structures," in Mark A. Wrathall, ed., *Religion After Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 58.

transcendent. This delimits the reach of the human experience and orients it to a naturalistic frame. It is in this closure that Taylor locates what he will call the secular age: an age of loss and exile precisely because belief in the transcendent becomes unthinkable (or at the very least difficult to achieve) and what replaces it is a plurality of the modalities of human flourishing.

We also see a multiplication of different modalities of religious belief and practice—what Taylor calls a "nova effect"[3]—as characteristic of this situation. One sees this nova effect in phenomena as diverse as new-age spiritualisms and the resurgence of religious fundamentalism in various parts of the world to the rise of secular humanism and militant atheism. In the wake of this plurality of views, Taylor nevertheless proposes that the challenge of this age, despite the unthinkability of belief, is the need "to enlarge our palette of such points of contact with fullness."[4] In an illuminating study on the 16th and 17th century mystics, Michel de Certeau presents a possible point of departure: "[Mystical discourse] suggests a way of entering those ageing texts and surveying the movement of their modes of writing against the background of today's issues."[5] In an attempt to provide a cogent response to Taylor's challenge, we can ask: how can mystical discourse and its textualities provide us a mode of dwelling in the so-called secular age?

Attempting to answer this question requires two steps. First, we shall be mapping out the conditions of belief and unbelief that Taylor elaborates, specifically with regard to the diversification of the varieties of human fullness, i.e., the proliferation of different ideas of "the good life" after the modern turn towards naturalism and the

[3]Taylor, "Closed World Structures," 66.

[4]Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 729.

[5]Michel de Certeau, "Mystic Speech," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 81.

moral subject.[6] This will set up what Taylor will call "the nova effect" and will give us a picture of the state of contemporary religious belief, which in turn will lead us to the second step: the place of the mystics in contemporary religious discourse. We shall be utilizing Michel de Certeau's analysis of mystic speech and writing in uncovering certain themes—specifically, narratives of exile and excess—that can serve as signposts in reclaiming a sense of spirituality in a time of crisis, as the mystics did in their "dark nights." Elaborating on the mystics will hopefully provide a response to Taylor's challenge to "enlarge our palette on such points on human fullness" and point to the possibility of reclaiming a place that, at the "twilight of the idols," has become vacuous and deserted. What is at stake, in the final analysis, is a new possibility of dwelling in an age of loss.

II. A Spiritual Crisis?

Nietzsche paints a picture of the state of contemporary religious belief in *The Madman*:

> Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breadth of empty space? … Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition? Gods too decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves?[7]

Nietzsche's madman, we are led to see, leaves as he says, "This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—*and yet they have done it themselves*."[8] Robert Pippin notes that this parable (if one were to call it one) "has come to represent and sum up not just

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[6]Taylor, "Closed World Structures," 52.

[7]Friedrich Nietzsche, selections from "The Gay Science," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. & trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1982), 95.

[8]Nietzsche, selections from "The Gay Science," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 96.

the unbelievability of God in the late modern world, but the 'death' of a Judeo-Christian form of moral life, the end of metaphysics, or the unsuccessful attempt to end metaphysics, or even the end of philosophy itself."[9] Despite the plurality of interpretations that abound from Nietzsche's account, it cannot be denied that he speaks of a particular form of life that has become difficult to attain: that of a religious life. The contemporary age, at least most prevalent in the so-called Western world, can be characterized by a certain degree of impossibility in sustaining religious belief or, at the very least, a suspicion in the belief in what is usually referred to as "God." What is striking in Nietzsche is that he puts the blame on humanity for this "death of God." This does not mean, however, that humanity was directly responsible for "murdering" God; what is suggested is simply the fact that the human person and his or her way of living had something to do with the gradual withering away of our traditional conceptions of God. Far from the usual narratives of the triumph of science over religion, or of the success of reason over myth and superstition, what we are confronted with in our contemporary age is *a change in the conditions of belief and unbelief* such that these conditions have made religious belief increasingly difficult, and in some places, even impossible. It is this alteration of the conditions of belief and unbelief that allows us to call our age, even if only provisionally, a spiritual *crisis*: a moment of decision (*krinein*) that becomes available because a plurality of choices has been made apparent due to the change in conditions.[10]

[9]Robert Pippin, "Love and Death in Nietzsche," in Mark Wrathall, ed., *Religion After Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 7.

[10]As Taylor would note later, this crisis has taken on different forms, most especially of what others would call a "return of the religious." Such a rise in the apparent plurality of religious worldviews refutes, at least for Taylor, the thesis that increasing secularization has led to a more marginal sense of belief which will eventually lead to its own demise. He even points out that this age is dominated by a concern for "spiritual wholeness" which makes manifest the change in the conditions of belief and unbelief. See Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 506–507.

How did the human condition come to this? What shifts in the history of thought brought about this crisis? Charles Taylor, in his landmark book *A Secular Age*, offers a redefinition of what is traditionally called "secularism":

> the change I want to define and trace is one which takes us from a society in which it is virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others. … Belief in God is no longer axiomatic. There are alternatives.[11]

This redefinition is striking since it shows us 1) the socio-political context in which belief and the activity of believing in God are situated in, and 2) how such a belief (or lack thereof) involves some degree of human agency, i.e., one *chooses* to believe such-and-such. This modality of secularism is helpful for our goal in this essay since Taylor shows a genealogy of the concept of religious belief, and the conditions of the permissibility and impermissibility of such a belief. In short, the contemporary crisis reveals a history of confluences that leads to what we are confronting now.

Something peculiar happens in modernity. For Taylor:

> [The] new creation of a civilized, "polite" order succeeded beyond what its first originators could have hoped for, and [this] in turn led to a new reading of what a Christian order might be, one which was seen more and more in "immanent" terms (the polite, civilized order is the Christian order). This version of Christianity was shorn of much of its "transcendent" content, and was thus open to a new departure, in which the understanding of the good order (what I call the "modern moral order") could be embraced outside of the original theological, providential framework, and in certain cases even against it (as with Voltaire, Gibbon, and in another way Hume).[12]

Modernity marks the era wherein the unchallenged claims to moral and spiritual order by Christendom are faced with the relatively new entry of the discourse of self-sufficient humanism, which for Taylor

[11]Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3.

[12]Taylor, "Closed World Structures," 63.

refers to a mode of humanism that accepts "no final goals beyond goals beyond human flourishing, nor any allegiance to anything else beyond this flourishing."[13] He argues that the rise of science at the turn of modernity paved the way for a more radical and fundamental shift in the human being's mode of comportment with the world: "the power of materialism today does not come from the scientific 'facts,' but has rather to be explained in terms of the power of a certain package *uniting materialism with a moral outlook* [my italics], the package we could call 'atheist humanism,' or exclusive humanism."[14] More than merely the rise of science and the age of discovery, we also see in modernity the fusion of the horizon of the purely materialist and naturalist account of the world with that of the question of "the good life." As we shall see later, any inquiry into the good life—at the height of modernity—cannot but exclude God from the picture.

Taylor traces this fusion in the gradual formation of a robust ideal of a human being capable of his or her own actions and, consequently, the "hardening" of this capability not only to be the author of one's own actions but also to *regard* the world according to this capability. In short, we see the "human" taking center stage—a fixed reference point not only for the intelligibility of the world but also for the meaningfulness of the human being's place in this order. But this state of affairs was not always the case. For Taylor, this relatively modern invention was a far cry from what was traditionally considered to be the *status quo* in the order of the cosmos. One could say that before the modern turn, God's activity in the world was implicated in the numerous human dealings and structures that made up society, not to

[13]Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 18. It must be clear that Taylor himself considers other approaches to understanding this phenomenon in modernity, such as the rise of science and the scientific mindset, but he considers these approaches inadequate for the purpose at hand, which is to describe *how* the conditions of belief changed from one of naïve acceptance of a theistic interpretation of the world order to one of doubt because of the existence of viable and rational alternatives. These alternatives might include the scientific mindset, but they are in no way *constitutive* of these mindsets. See Taylor, "Closed World Structures," 54–56.

[14]Taylor, "Closed World Structures," 58.

mention becoming a reference point in the whole order of the cosmos.[15] A reference to God made up the architecture of the cosmos; the natural world was a creation of a benevolent Being, and the human being had to find her place, so to speak, in this order.[16] It is thus tempting to think that the transition from pre-modern and medieval societies to modern ones concerned itself with a gradual suspicion and decline of the involvement of God with the dealings of humanity. But as Taylor points out, this perceived "subtraction theory" is far too simple a schema that uncritically pits humanism against theism:

> That I am left with only human concerns doesn't tell me to take universal human welfare as my goal; nor does it tell me that freedom is important, or fulfillment, or equality. Just being confined to human goods could just as well find expression in my concerning myself exclusively with my own material welfare, or that of my family or immediate milieu.[17]

The fusion of the materialistic world view with that of the question of the moral order is meant to show precisely this: that the bifurcation between modern "enlightenment" and "traditional" religious beliefs becomes an inadequate tool in understanding how exactly we ended up with our contemporary age. For Taylor, placing the "human" as the central reference point does not at all mean that old regimes of religious belief are now invalidated; on the contrary, it becomes the point of departure—a necessary postulate, if you will—in understanding how exactly the conditions of belief get reconfigured in the modern age. One cannot understand the so-called "secular age" without inquiring about the role played by human agency.

Despite the relatively modern invention of what we can call the "hard conception" of human agency (authorship of actions), we find traces of it, surprisingly, in religion and religious practice. Ruth Abbey

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[15]Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 25.

[16]Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 125.

[17]Taylor, "Closed World Structures," 61.

links Taylor's insights in *Sources of the Self* with his work on secularism and points out that the gradual insulation of the self from the perceived "outside world" can be traced to techniques of self-control that were proliferated by neo-Stoics such as Justus Lipsius.[18] Abbey continues: "In order for humans to be sole guarantors of order and good conduct in the world, they needed not just a view of their technical capacity to change themselves and their world, but also an argument about motivation."[19] Practices of self-control and inwardness proliferated in the centuries leading up to the modern age: Taylor points to, among others, Meister Eckhart and Thomas Kempis as having emphasized the value of inward life and private prayer for cultivating one's personal faith.[20] These moves towards the inward life can be said to be, as Taylor points out, an attempt to "make the faith relevant," so to speak, as the gap between the elites and the masses was becoming more and more incommensurable (it was not a surprise that most clergymen were elites during that time).[21] The explicitly religious motivations of the turn towards an inner life (as distinguished from *inwardness*, as I will clarify later), among a host of other reasons[22] such as the various injustices committed on the part of the Church hierarchy, provided the necessary fodder for a much-later development that would shake up the Latin Church: the Reformation. To be sure, those who advocated the inner life surely did not have a total re-ordering of the whole Latin Church in their minds; but the public nature of these developments—how

[18]Ruth Abbey, *Charles Taylor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 206. To be sure, such an interpretation cannot be taken to be definitive of the entire Latin Christian tradition. One has to point out that this is one of many (probably disjointed and unrelated, but nonetheless important) developments in early Christianity in regard to which Taylor will talk about the self later on.

[19]Abbey, *Charles Taylor*, 207.

[20]Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 70.

[21]Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 70.

[22]Interestingly, Taylor also points out that the "enchanted" worldview and the subsequent attempt by the Church to capitalize on this enchantment also led to the Reformation. For a summary of his views, see Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 75–76.

the disenchantment was made more apparent in the attempt by the Church to suppress them—led to a multiplication and the eventual homogenization of the concept of the believer.[23] This uniformity—that *anyone* can attain the *inwardness* of a religious life—sets the stage for what Taylor calls a "buffered self" that will eventually develop into the Cartesian vision of the *cogito* reaching out to the *res extensa*, which will animate much of Western modernity and set its language—one of subjectivity and agency.[24]

I have used *inwardness* in contrast with *the inner life*. What merits us this distinction? A detailed explanation of "the inner life" will come much later, but for now, inwardness can be taken to mean not just an introspection but also—as we have alluded to earlier through Abbey—an attempt at articulating a motivation for such a move: one can legitimize one's move precisely because the resources of such a move are not found "outside me" but are present within me as my *inherent capabilities*. And so the story goes for religious belief: at the turn of modernity, one "discovers" these inherent capabilities—one can choose to believe such-and-such. But this is not mere anthropomorphism; for Taylor, this phenomenon is closely tied—as with the Reform spirit—with the rise of the belief that one is entitled to inwardness and selfhood *that is given by God*:

> Disbelief in God arises in close symbiosis with this belief in a moral order of rights-bearing individuals, who are destined (by God or Nature) to act for mutual benefit; an order which thus rejects the earlier honor ethic which exalted the warrior, as it also tends to occlude any transcendent horizon.[25]

So what we have is not really an invalidation of the belief in God; what we have is a more complex and nuanced web of relations and

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[23]Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 77.

[24]Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 143.

[25]Taylor, "Closed World Structures," 63. Taylor sees this as the point of departure for many deist theories where God gradually assumes an impersonal and indifferent persona, and the universe becomes an order made by God that is waiting to be discovered.

motivations that provides the tools for one to think that religious belief is *one* choice among other choices. God still figures in one's life but it sets in motion the gradual decentering of God and the replacement of the "human" at the center of all reference. This decentering of God did not mean the retreat of God from the public sphere; what we have is God's marginalization in the face of a new "center": man and his or her relation with the impersonal order of the universe. This, most precisely, is the progenitor of exclusive humanism. Moreover, it also reveals a fundamental difference with that of the old world order of enchantment and cosmic order: the closure of the transcendent horizon.

Here we come full circle: why exactly does the transcendent horizon close up? Or, we can ask: how does it occur that the move towards inwardness in turn closes off the horizon of the transcendent? We turn to the fusion of naturalistic-materialist thinking and the vision of the good. If before it was a matter of "finding oneself" amidst the order of the cosmos, we now experience a reversal: the order of the cosmos is dependent upon my agency, because to exercise my agency is part of the blueprint of Nature. In other words, the vision of the good coincides and fuses with the naturalist (that is to say, indifferent) picture of the cosmos. One has no need for "vertical" transcendence because the good is to be found in what can be experienced in nature and in the immanent world. Thus, we see how the transcendent is closed off with the shift of focus towards the autonomous individual, away from the idea that the "good" can be contemplated as an intimation between the human being and the cosmos.[26] These models of inwardness and self-legislature were to become the paradigms of thought that translated themselves in terms of social transactions and architectures: "The fact that both society and politics came to be seen as self-grounding and self-reproducing points to yet another way in which what was once transcendent—the source of social order—became immanent and

[26]Rémi Brague, *The Wisdom of the World: The Human Experience of the Universe in Western Thought*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 152.

secularity became further entrenched."[27] It is in this multiplication of immanent frames that the agent now finds herself or himself. From the untenable position of unbelief in the medieval times, we see a shift in the conditions of belief and unbelief: the pluralities of individual human flourishing.

And thus we get a picture of the contemporary age: an age where there is a manifold of possibilities for thinking about—and acting on—the good life. Taylor, as we have seen, locates this pluralized vision of the good in the transformation of the modern moral subject as the author of his or her own actions. We have also seen that it is in this transformation that the transcendent horizon— a "vertical conception" of the good life—gradually becomes more and more difficult to sustain. This is not to say that religious belief is on the decline; on the contrary, a buffet of "contacts with the transcendent" abound, as evidenced by what various scholars refer to as the phenomenon of the "return of the religious."[28] But what is telling here, Taylor argues, is that these varieties are grounded on human concerns and human aspirations, thus producing the *illusion* of reaching out to this transcendent: from new-age spiritualisms to the oft-used label of "spiritual but not religious," this illustrates what Taylor calls "the nova effect":

> Then there came … within the context of the modern moral order … a viable alternative to belief, of forms of exclusive humanism, in turn followed by a multiplication of both believing and unbelieving positions …. This all generated the challenge, undermining, and dissolution of the early social forms which embedded God's presence in social space.[29]

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[27]Abbey, *Charles Taylor*, 208.

[28]Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," in Jacques Derrida & Gianni Vattimo, eds., *Religion*, trans. David Webb (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 42.

[29]Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 531. He also discusses the epistemic roots of this frame in the latter chapters of *A Secular Age*:

> What we share is what I have been calling "the immanent frame"; the different structures we live in: scientific, social, technological, and

What is apparent in this nova effect is the lingering doubt that abounds, even for the staunchest believer—more than due to the plurification of choices which makes it possible to think of an "otherwise," we also see that a suspicion of traditional confessional religious belonging abounds simply because the social space where that belief is practiced no longer holds as much legitimacy as before. To believe in God is not the only option available, thus reconfiguring the space for belief.[30]

Despite this, Taylor also sees a positive import in this phenomenon:

> The very fact that its forms are not absolutely in tune with much of the spirit of our age; a spirit in which people can be imprisoned, and feel the need to break out; the fact that faith connects us to so many spiritual avenues across different ages; this can over time draw people towards it.[31]

The argument here is that one does not need to "recover" the conditions of belief and unbelief before the modern transformation (the delineation was not that clean, anyway), but whether, in this age of crisis, a path may be taken that "enlarges our palette" with contacts of fullness, that is to say, human fullness and fulfillment that do not depend *solely* on individual human flourishing. What is at stake here is the possibility of *choosing* to open up to the transcendent in the midst of the secular waste land, which in the final analysis is a "return" to the religious, but a return, in the words of T. S. Eliot, to "where we started / And know the place for the first time."[32]

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so on, constitute such a frame in that they are part of a "natural", or "this-worldly" order which can be understood in its own terms, without reference to the "supernatural" or "transcendent." (594)

[30]Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 531.

[31]Taylor, *A Secular Age,* 533.

[32]T. S. Eliot, "Four Quartets," http://www.coldbacon.com/poems/fq.html (accessed March 18, 2014).

III. Retrieving the Mystical: The Locus of Language

Notwithstanding the increasing interest in mystical literature and what is commonly called "mysticism", one should be careful in proceeding with a study on the mystics, let alone what constitutes as "mystical experience," if ever it can even be studied in its phenomenality. We can ask: what exactly constitutes the "mystical"? Jean-Luc Marion notes that the term, "especially in the academic domain where rationalism seems to encompass every possible form of rationality," has been identified as either a purely subjective supra-essential experience, or as a term that escapes any kind of scientific rigor.[33] One can even accede to the fact that the term "mystic" has acquired a pejorative sense, becoming a euphemism for what is generally referred to as "crazy." For instance, in his *Through a Glass Darkly*, Ingmar Bergman paints a very vivid picture of this perception with Karin, the film's protagonist, who is overcome by a vision of God—she proclaims, "I have seen God. He is a monster," right before she is whisked away to a waiting helicopter for treatment. It is therefore safe to say that a study of the mystics in the secular age will be, at the very least, quite difficult, and asking about what constitutes a mystical experience may seem like a chimeric pursuit.

But one has to ask: is there really *a* concept of the mystical, much less mystical experience? Grace Jantzen notes that the Christian West has understood the mystical "in a variety of times and places" and that the notion of the mystical as an entirely subjective and absolutely private experience only flourished in modernity, where it eventually established itself as the paradigm in understanding what exactly constitutes "the mystical."[34] She further notes that the very concept

[33]Jean-Luc Marion, "Introduction: What Do We Mean by 'Mystic'?," in Michael Kessler & Christian Sheppard, eds., *Mystics: Presence and Aporia*, trans. Gareth Gollrad (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 1.

[34]Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender, and Mysticism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 323. It must be noted here that Jantzen seeks to sketch a genealogy

of "mystical experience" only entered the grammar of religion in modernity, when the power and the cosmological hegemony of the Church were diffused and reconfigured according to the secular state.[35] If one were to investigate the "mystical," one cannot confine oneself to an investigation of the mere phenomenality of experience because one cannot but run up to one's own discursive construction of what *counts* as mystical experience. Here Marion, in his attempt at sketching the limits of objective phenomenality and the possibility of opening up to what he calls "the saturated phenomenon," will rightfully agree:

> Saturated phenomena should not be constituted at all, and what we experience with them is precisely an intuition overwhelming any possible concept. This is not because the saturated phenomenon is irrational, but because we are unable to be rational enough to produce concepts matching the intuition that is nevertheless in fact given.[36]

We can therefore say that "mystical experience" exists, but not in the modern sense of "experience," that is to say, experience of the object corresponding to the intuition.

There is, however, one more location—a discursive site, if you will—in which "mystics" can be investigated without sacrificing

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of mysticism within the question of gendered power. It is striking, nonetheless, how Jantzen, even before Asad and Taylor, anticipates the discursivity of religious concepts in modernity, and how such constructions influence how we generally understand religion not only as a concept unto itself but also in relation to the secular. For instance, she notes that:

> It was only with the development of the secular state, when religious experience was no longer perceived as a source of knowledge and power, that it became safe to allow women to be mystics. Thus it came about that when mysticism became constructed as private and personal, having nothing to do with politics, it was also possible to see it as compatible with a woman's role as the "angel of the house," servicing her husband and children not only physically but spiritually as well. (Jantzen, *Power, Gender, and Mysticism*, 326)

[35]Jantzen, *Power, Gender, and Mysticism*, 326.

[36]Marion, "Introduction," 5.

the rigor of analysis to mere fantasy formations: the textualities of *mystic literature*. In his *The Mystic Fable*, Michel de Certeau outlines this historiography of the mystics:

> The mystic groups and books nevertheless constitute a specific historical reality. Although, from that point of view, they appear in the formal guise of absence—a past—they are amenable to an analysis that sets them within a multiplicity of correlations among economic, social, cultural, epistemological, and other data. To establish these coherences (correlation is the instrument of the historian) is to preserve the difference of the past from the seduction of partial resemblances, from generalizations suggested by philosophical impatience, or from continuities postulated by genealogical piety. … It comes from many a sojourn in these remote corners of the past that reveal to the historian the infinitude of a local singularity.[37]

The inevitable reduction of history to text bears an inherent danger of treating historical events and actors as mere objects of study: "What gets called 'history' (a school subject, a professional practice, a type of television programme, and so on) consists of ordering and commenting on documents."[38] This tendency in historiography establishes the space of power of the surveyor, who looks at her objects of study. The text then becomes a formalist narrative unity that is enclosed upon itself; language is idealized as an object of study, and it serves as a mere tool in trying to "understand" the meaning of a historical event.[39] De Certeau points to this new historiography precisely to look at the subjects or

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[37]Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago, Il: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 9.

[38]Ben Highmore, *Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture* (London: Continuum, 2006), 23.

[39]What is apparent here is that the very neutrality and surveyability of the space of the Expert is itself a construction of the modern conception of objectivity. De Certeau makes a more forceful diagnosis in *Culture in the Plural*: "The anonymous universalism of the city, of culture, of work, or of knowledge develops the impossibility of being situated as different and of reintroducing alterity—hence conflict—into language" (*Culture in the Plural*, ed. & intro. Luce Giard, trans. & afterword by Tom Conley [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997], 33).

actors that are *implicated* in the linguistic tactics of the text. In other words, de Certeau looks at how the text is made possible (and therefore only possible) within a nexus of institutional networks that allow for an actor—in our case, the mystic—to practice the writing of the text without reducing it to a representational space of objective study.[40] He wants to refocus the study of history away from the point of view of the expert, and into the practical space of discourse in which writing is first and foremost considered as a *practice*: "[mystic language] is the effect of an elaboration upon existent language …. The uses that define it reflect the operations carried out by speakers."[41]

De Certeau begins his analysis of the mystics: "Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century mystics proliferated about a loss. It is the historical figure of that loss, making readable an absence that has multiplied the productions of desire."[42] Paradoxically, rather than revealing the corridors of power that allow for the proliferation of what is generally

[40]Highmore, *Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture*, 33. Furthermore, this "writing of history" is, for de Certeau, always situated in an economy of institutional power and influence that provides the space for permissible and impermissible actions, where the agent (de Certeau will later call him the *everyman*) navigates and negotiates through these spaces. His method, therefore, aims to show how the *possibility* of knowledge is also a *production* of knowledge. Thus, in *The Writing of History*, de Certeau says: "Only a theory that articulates a practice can be accepted, that is, a theory which on the one hand opens the practices to a space of a society, while on the other it organizes the procedures belonging to a given discipline" (Michel de Certeau, "The Historiographical Operation," in *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988], 57). It is in this sense that the text—that is to say, the operations of language in a text—becomes a site for a historiography of the mystics precisely because it is these texts that we encounter, and this encounter could not have been possible without these negotiations within institutional and historical spaces. As Highmore says, "When historiography embraces this aspect of production, the changing history of an event, the mutability of its meaning, can become the object of reflection" (Highmore, *Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture*, 35).

[41]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 141–142.

[42]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 13.

referred to as mystic literature, what characterizes this historical period in terms of religious discourse and mystic writing is the *ambiguity* of the institutional structure of the Church:

> It reiterates at the level of biographical experience all the vocabulary of the Church reformation: division, wounds, sickness, lying, desolations, and so on. Individual bodies tell the story of the institutions of meaning. The end of a world is postulated in all of the spiritual poetics. Their bright and daring trajectories streak the night sky, from which they have been removed by pious collectors of mystic traces. They are written on that blank page from which we must relearn to read them.[43]

The theological[44] grammar that constitutes the space for permissible and impermissible discourses in Christendom undergoes a drastic shift at the dawn of modernity, and for de Certeau, he takes up the specific timeframe of the 16th–17th centuries as a reference point for this shift:

> Learned clerics were being separated from the common folk, and administrative power was becoming more highly organized and centralized. As theology became more professionalized and international, its knowledge became more technical. The divisions between different ecclesiastical levels of authority were politicized, and secular law was becoming autonomous. Rural culture and rural "devotions" were increasingly isolated from the emerging urban bourgeoisie.[45]

These shifts in the social order bespeak of a change in social relations: from the *corpus mysticum* that defined much of pre-modern discourses on the legitimization of institutional practices, most especially Eucharistic

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[43]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 14.

[44]I use this term liberally, as it is also clear how the word *theology* can lend itself to meanings that may not have made sense to these authors. For instance, Marion notes that there was, strictly speaking, no concept of theology before the advent of modernity (or, for Marion, the Suarezian systematization of metaphysics); there was only *vera philosophia*, where *verus philosophus est amator Dei*. See Jean-Luc Marion, "On the Foundation of the Distinction Between Theology and Philosophy," *Budhi* 1 & 2 & 3 (2009): 52.

[45]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 85.

and liturgical practices in which the body is the site of an absence (Jesus Christ), the "mystical body" now becomes the hierarchical institution of the physical Church, a stand-in for the absence of the body that legitimizes the discourse of what counts as *religious*.[46] This change in perspective in the final analysis reorders the productions of knowledge, which in turn establish the range of permissible and impermissible interpretations of religious practices; divergent discourses are institutionalized and marginalized according to the relations of power that serve as their condition of possibility. *Only in this context* could the mystics have arisen, and it is only at the turn of modernity that we can understand "mystics" as the place of a loss.

For the purposes of this essay, we can point out two general—though not entirely representative—themes that we find in mystic literature that point to its context and possibility: the themes of exile and excess. It is this dual-hermeneutic of expulsion and saturation that can serve as a schema for the analysis of the practical space of mystic speech.

The term "mystics"—at least in the 16th century onwards[47]—came to refer to groups of people, even if indeterminately, who were without a place or, better yet, who *lacked* a place: "The noun 'mystic' seems to have made its appearance within and in reference to groups that were furthest removed from the theological institution; like many proper nouns, it first took the form of a nickname or accusatory term."[48] From the ecclesiastical point of view, the mystics came to be known as

[46]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 81–82. De Certeau makes a further case that the bifurcation of Church and Scripture and their respective co-constituencies with the Sacramental Body allows for the mystical "third term" to serve as the space for the manifestation of both ecclesiastical and Scriptural economies in the mystical body. See de Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 85.

[47]The specificities of the history of how "mystics" came to be understood are too complex and drawn out to be mentioned in this paper. De Certeau himself undertakes this task; see his *Mystic Fable*, 79–112.

[48]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 107.

"moderns,"[49] those who inaugurated a "new" form of discourse. Even from the Reformation movement, Martin Luther himself discredited mystical practices as being symptomatic of the hierarchical and sacramental (i.e., symbolic) valuation of Christianity.[50] It is therefore safe to say that the mystics were a marginalized group within the socio-political shifts of power within the Church and the *saeculum*. This marginalization comes at a time of socio-cultural change: for instance, the rise of the German mystics such as Angelus Silesius also coincided with the rise of the urban bourgeoisie, depriving the former of a privileged position in Church matters, which for de Certeau "allowed for greater independence from religious authorities."[51] Apart from the shifts in social classes, the High Middle Ages were characterized by three major linguistic mobilizations: 1) the formalization and the technicalization of Latin (most apparent in the institutionalization of Latin in universities); 2) the rise and spread of the *use* of vernacular languages,[52] making bilingualism a linguistic trait of that era; and,

[49]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 109. He quotes Marais and Boileau as speaking of the mystics as moderns who "are not found in the ancients."

[50]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 95. Fanning also notes that mystical practices within the Reformation movement "stiffened the Protestant mistrust of such phenomena" (Steven Fanning, *Mystics of the Christian Tradition* [New York: Routledge, 2001], 139).

[51]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 85. This, of course, was accentuated by the fact that the Inquisition was at its height.

[52]This was accentuated by the increasing usage of the printing press, making the dissemination of their works easier and more convenient. Both de Certeau and Fanning point to Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros as helping in the proliferation of mystic literature during the 16th century. This, of course, also helped spread the idea that mysticism is for everyone and not just the educated elite. This goes to show how the factors underlying the productions of knowledge influence not only value assignments to objects but also the idea of what is implicated as "right" for a human person in that particular economy. See Fanning, *Mystics*, 149.

most importantly, 3) the increasing mobility of texts via *translations*.[53] It is then of no surprise that mystic literature abounded on the frontiers not only in terms of socio-economic classes but also in terms of geographical location, where encounters with other cultural traditions were commonplace.[54] This rapid mobility of the productions of knowledge and the fragmentation of one's identification with one's "natural" or "home" language set up the possibility of a "new" mode of discourse—what de Certeau calls "ways of speaking"—that would characterize mystic speech. It is a way of speaking that does not find its home, denied by the institutional power on the one hand and forged and explored in a foreign land on the other.

This *excursive discourse* reveals the space that allows us to see not only the context but also the internal struggles of these mystics who were excluded by the institutional power that disallowed for the legitimacy of their discourse. Thus, we also see a diversification of the modes for articulating this exile, for various modalities of literary genres and styles also populated mystic literature. Examples of these are the autobiographical style of Teresa de Avila, "fictional itineraries," and "points for reflection" or rules, such as the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignacio de Loyola, among others.[55] These narrative styles

[53]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 116. De Certeau specifically cites Henri de Herp's *Spieghel der Volcomenheit*, first published in 1477, and its subsequent translations in different vulgar languages as examples of this high rate of textual mobility. This did not only allow for the rapid dissemination of the work; it also created hermeneutic spaces where distinctive discursive practices could abound.

[54]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 85. Both de Certeau and Brague note the significance of the "new Christians" movement (converted Jews) in Spain during the sixteenth century, and how these movements of conversion also influenced the productions of knowledge—in our case, mystic literature and, for Brague, the intermingling of people who belonged to different religions (Judaism) which allowed for its dissemination in the Christian world. See Rémi Brague, *The Legend of the Middle Ages: Philosophical Explorations of Medieval Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 22.

[55]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 120.

speak not only of their exile from the foundations of meaning—the hierarchical Christian Church—but also of their act of solidarity with the gradual disintegration of the Christian hegemonic order.[56] This seemingly paradoxical situation also gives birth to mystic utterance: the founding of a language that could articulate the "language of God" within the fragmentation of society and language into its vulgarities. The mystical subject is thrust *in medias res*, between the acceptance of the irreparability of things past and, at the same time, the possibility for an articulation of a renewal of faith in the midst of the gradual withering away of the institutions of meaning. In one of de Certeau's celebrated studies, he focuses on a Jesuit mystic named Jean-Joseph Surin in order to elaborate this characteristic in mystic writing. He quotes Surin from his *Lettres*:

> This image will seem like only a hollow thought to others, like a dream my mind made up, because the natural, common sense upon which our faith is built bolsters us to such a degree against these things of the other life that, as soon as a man says he is damned, the others judge that it is only madness.[57]

The mystics were deeply aware of the changing circumstances of their times, and their search for God led them to articulate their own spiritual poverty and to confront and dwell in their own decadence.[58]

But it is in this search for God in the midst of loss that they are founded by an experience of the Divine. One can discern the theme of *excess* being co-constitutive with the experience of exile latent in mystical texts. For instance, Teresa de Avila would often speak of "a feeling of the presence of God [that] made it impossible for me to doubt that he was within me, or that I was totally engulfed in Him. This was

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[56]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 86.

[57]Michel de Certeau, "Surin's Melancholy," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 102.

[58]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 86.

no kind of vision."[59] An encounter occurs in mystical utterance: the mystical subject in the midst of the disintegration of the institutions of meaning on the one hand, an Other that irrupts in the scene on the other. Here a dialogue is sought after: "The rupture, ambiguity, and falsity that plurality spreads throughout the world creates the need to restore a *dialogue*."[60] One never engages in mystic speech by oneself, as with soliloquy; one is always at the behest of an Other that (always) overdetermines one's speaking. Thus, de Certeau would speak of mystic literature as "not written" because "it writes itself,"[61] although by saying that he is not reverting back to an esoteric mode of utterance. Bearing in mind what we have so far discussed, we can see that this auto-biography (self-writing) is itself a production of the context of their time, in the search for this Other that in the end allows for their speaking. Ultimately for him,

> the *I* is both figurative and a figure, a symbolic representation. The figure, the third and last element to be discussed, is not utterative, except disguised as an image. It is, rather, an organizing factor. It marks in the text the *empty* place (empty of world) where the other speaks, following a process the discourse describes by *recounting its own production*.[62]

The *I*, therefore, becomes the site where the Other irrupts. But what defines this irruption?

A characteristic element in mystic writing is the overdetermination of meaning, an excess of intuition. We have already noted earlier with Marion that it is this "saturated phenomenon" that may characterize the mystical experience. We also find this inscribed in mystic literature. For instance, we see in John of the Cross how the "dark night of the soul" eventually comes up to

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[59]Teresa of Avila, *The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila by Herself*, trans. J. M. Cohen (London: Penguin, 1957), 71.

[60]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 88.

[61]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 97.

[62]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 94.

> the enkindling of spiritual love in the soul, which, in the midst of these dark confines, feels itself to be keenly and sharply wounded in strong Divine love, and to have a certain realization and foretaste of God, although it understands nothing definitely, for, as we say, the understanding is in darkness.[63]

Images of darkness and supra-essential light, taking inspiration from Dionysius the Areopagite, populate mystical literature, locating a place "beyond my homeland" that is unnamable. And it is precisely this encounter with the Divine that takes up the *I*: it is not merely one who speaks, but God. We can borrow from Meister Eckhart in the 14th century and speak of this as the "birth of God within oneself"—*theogenesis*—that best characterizes this overdetermination of meaning.[64] Once again, it is in mystic textual practices that we are allowed to posit this "new beginning":

> Mystics are engaged in a politics of utterance …. This kind of "politics," like contemporary rhetoric, sets forth operational rules determining the relational usage of a language that has become uncertain of the real. It *reconstructs*, where the ontological relation between words and things has come undone, *loci* of *social* communication.[65]

The overdeterminations of meaning, apart from their autobiographical comportment, also serve as tactics that attempt to articulate a new beginning within the decadence of the Church. This "new beginning" is not at all an initiative of the agent: "The 'I' is 'formed'—by its act of willing *nothing* or by (forever) being incapable of doing what it wills—as a 'desire' bound only to the supposed desire of a Deity."[66] It is then of no surprise that a transformation occurs at the moment of encounter—"mystical union"—where the *I* is taken up by its dialogue

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[63]John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, trans., ed., & intro. E. Allison Pears (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 141.

[64]Reiner Schürmann, *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy*, trans. & comm. Reiner Schürmann, foreword by David Appelbaum (Great Barrington: Lindisfarne Books, 2001), 73.

[65]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 91.

[66]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 92.

partner, who is none other than God: "With his gentle hand he wounded my neck and caused all / my senses to be suspended."[67] The usage of the *I* in mystic utterance does not only refer to the mystical subject taken up by God; it refers to nothing else but God himself. The identification of God with the *I* is also itself a veil: one can never know of the face of God.[68] This establishes the clear continuity with tradition—"No one has seen God" (Jn. 1:18)—while at the same time subverting it through the textual tactics of mystic writing: "I remained, lost in oblivion; My face I reclined on the Beloved."[69]

In the final analysis, these descriptions of excess and exile "articulated the experience of an *elsewhere*, but within the tradition they adopted."[70] The mystics had to show their communion with the Church of God while at the same time distinguishing themselves from the decadence of the time. It is here that we are shown the ingenuity of mystic literature—the practice of subversion through writing or, in de Certeau's words, "the power to induce a departure."

With this excursus regarding mystic utterance and tactics, we are now in a position to return to our main question: how can mystical discourse and its textual inscriptions provide us with a mode of dwelling in the so-called secular age?

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[67]John of the Cross, *Dark Night*, 30.

[68]As Marion notes, "he remains God only on condition that this ignorance be established and admitted definitively" (Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name: How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology'," in John D. Caputo & Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999], 34).

[69]John of the Cross, *Dark Night*, 30. De Certeau also notes that the mystics relied heavily on Sacred Scripture, showing how these groups were still operating within the tradition of the Church. See de Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 98.

[70]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 22.

IV. The Irruptions of the Mystical in the Secular Waste Land

What can we learn from the mystics of the 16th and 17th centuries? To be sure, the social and material conditions that gave rise to mystic literature were profoundly different from our own context and time. One should likewise be suspicious of the apparent continuity in discourse from their time to our time, as if the same movements in power and knowledge will also result in the same eventualities, and as if there are more or less the same phenomena that constitute both our age and theirs. As Foucault reminds us, this does not of course preclude the fact that there may be similarities in terms of the conditions that allow for the social shifts to occur. What we have to be mindful of, however, is that these shifts "are always the result of a construction the rules of which must be known, and the justifications of which must be scrutinized."[71] Nevertheless, we already find within mystic literature the possibility of "learning from them." For de Certeau, "[mystic utterance] says nothing. It permits saying. For that reason, it is a true 'beginning.' It is a liberating space, where yesterday's readers—but 'we' also—can find speech."[72] The hermeneutic key that allows for our appropriation—despite the clear and irreconcilable gulf which history sets up between those mystics and us—is their *very inclusion within tradition through language*, which is none other than the articulation of the *personal* encounter with God that lies at the heart of Christian revelation—an encounter with a person. The vocative "we" that mystics use is meant not only for their immediate listeners; it is also directed to the members of the *ecclesia*, the people of God. Thus, de Certeau quotes Surin in the prologue of *La Science Experimentale*:

> It is in the same spirit and with the same intent that these things that we have known through an adventure we have had during our century, and in which God's providence engaged us, are used in this discourse

[71]Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 25.

[72]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 99.

> to affirm the faith we are engaged to profess by the Catholic religion, and to make us better Christians. All those to whom we speak in this book have an interest in these things. For them I would like to perform a service for eternity.[73]

Here it is not Surin that speaks of this eternal performativity but the Eternal Word. The textual tactics of the double-reference of the *I* allow for this plurification and multiplication of the same discursive practice. This is not to say that the discursive tactic transforms mystic utterance into a universilizable discourse; on the contrary, it can only be understood within its proper context, and we have shown this above. That is to say, mystic utterance can only be understood *in the context of a loss*, and it is in this loss that an eternity can be performed: an indwelling in the "ceaseless present" made possible by the irruption of the Other which forever eludes one's calculation and rationalization.

And do we not have this in our secular age, when the plurification of the idea of human flourishing produces endless avenues for human agency to capitalize on? Against this anthropocentric tendency, a path is paved by mystic utterance, for it is only with the Other that one can "begin anew" by ceaselessly dwelling in one's time, despite the gradual dissolution of the institutions of meaning:

> One more thing, perhaps, is mystical: the establishment of a space where change serves as a foundation and saying loss is an other beginning. Because it is always *less* than what *comes* through it and allows a genesis, the mystic [poem] is connected to the *nothing* that opens the future, the time *to come*, and, more precisely, to that single work, "Yahweh," which forever makes possible the self-naming of that which induces departure.[74]

Mystic writing, in the final analysis, bears the weight of a broken tradition while at the same time maintaining a hope "to the Other" which makes "everything new" (Rev. 21:5). The fragmentation of society must not be taken as a negative moment, as the mystics

[73]De Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 180.

[74]De Certeau, "Mystic Speech," 100.

considered their time to be positive spaces for the irruption of the Divine:

> Blast the marginalized fragments of the past alive with the memory of suffering and hope; remove them from their seemingly coherent place in the grand narratives we have imposed upon them. Learn to live joyfully, not despairingly, with and in the great fragments we do indeed possess.[75]

With these "mystic signposts," we then ask: what is to be done in the waste land of the secular age? As long as we understand "doing" in terms of the robust human agent capable of being the author of his or her own actions, we are reverting back to the illusion of totalization and control, the grand narrativization of the totality of experience. Against this totalizing tendency one says with the mystics: to "live without a why." Meister Eckhart, as we have seen earlier, animates most of the subsequent mystic literature[76] precisely with this point:

> All things that are in time have a why. Thus when someone asks a man: "Why are you eating?"—"In order to gain strength."—"Why are you sleeping?"—"For the same reason." And so everything that is in time. But if someone asked a good man: "Why do you love God?"—"I do not know, because of God." …"Why are you living?"—"My word, I do not know! But I am happy to be alive."[77]

We can then read mystic literature against the backdrop of our time *as a mode of subversion* in our own attempts at totalizing from the

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[75]David Tracy, "Fragments: The Spiritual Situation of our Times," in John D. Caputo & Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 179.

[76]I qualify with "most" since some mystics, specifically the Spanish mystics of the 16th century, did not have any access to Eckhart's works, and it is only towards the end of the 16th century that Eckhart's sermons were spread throughout the Iberian peninsula. Nevertheless, it is equally striking how Eckhart and St. John, among others, share similar forms of mystical language.

[77]Meister Eckhart, "Woman, the Hour is Coming," in *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy*, trans. & comm. Reiner Schürmann, foreword by David Appelbaum (Great Barrington: Lindisfarne Books, 2001), 54.

standpoint of the robust human agent. Mystic utterance teaches us of the eventual failure of teleology in trying to achieve the "full human life" because it is only with and through the Other that one is taken up to the "mystical island."

While Taylor's model allows for plurality to abound from the point of view of the morally-constituted agent, the mystics teach us that human flourishing does not lie in the agency of the human person amidst the choices that are presented to him/her. Far from being a teleocratic principle of fullness[78] where the immanent is fully reconciled with the transcendent, the mystics clear out a space where the transcendent does not cease to irrupt. It is in this never-ending process of purgation and breakthrough—and here we see traces of the Dionysian mystical process—that a new beginning can finally be mapped out: not for the sake of some utopic future, but always a "kingdom that is here, but not yet." To be sure, one cannot just reject Taylor's sketch of the secular age, for it does hold some credence. What is essential here, however, is the genesis of the moment of choice that characterizes the varieties of human flourishing: the "condition of the possibility" of choice no longer lies in the agent. It is rather, as the prophets of Israel tell us, to be "called" and chosen in the midst of the world. The critical moment, then, is to *choose* to dwell in the decadence of our time, as the mystics did, for it is only in this dwelling that the heterological possibilities produce endless narrativity. It is not a matter of choosing what fits best for one's aspirations and desires, as is suggested by the pluralities of human flourishing; it is, rather, a matter of choosing to "let be"—what Eckhart has called *Gelassenheit*—and let the Other take up oneself. To assent to mystical utterance and to "follow them," in the final analysis, is to be led beyond the limits of technological and rational phenomenality, and onto the possibility of being founded upon by the Other: "the modern system of the calculating, technological subject opens a space that ultimately eludes

[78]Here we still discern traces of Taylor's Hegelianism in his attempt to reconcile plurality to form a totality.

the subject's planning and calculation because it eludes the subject's power and representation."[79]

V. Conclusion

We provided a response to Taylor's challenge to enlarge our palettes for the transcendent by taking inspiration from the mystic writing of the 16th and 17th centuries. With the aid of de Certeau's discursive analysis, we pointed out two elements in mystic utterance—excess and exile—that showed both 1) their context of loss and degradation but also 2) an establishment of a space where an encounter with the Divine reorders the economies of knowledge and faith. The subversive techniques of mystic utterance open up their discourse to endless narrativity, which in turn allows us to understand mystic utterance in our context. We ended with the possibility of opening up to an "Other" discourse as a possible path which the mystics clear out for us in our secular age.

The contemporary times can thus be said to be a *critical* moment in the history of thought not only in terms of how important it is to respond to our present predicament but, more importantly, in terms of being a space for *choice* that may lie outside the purview of human agency. We can thus end this essay most fittingly with David Tracy:

> It is crucial, I believe, that the two forms of awareness represented in secular thought by philosophy and tragedy are also present in Western religious thought. On the one hand, one finds a meditative and contemplative awareness that, when intensified, is well described as mystical. … On the other hand, one finds a prophetic awareness focused on evil injustice and suffering that, when intensified, becomes apocalyptic: when prophesy fails, apocalyptic takes over.[80]

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[79]Thomas A. Carlson, "Locating the Mystical Subject," in Michael Kessler & Christian Sheppard, eds., *Mystics: Presence and Aporia*, trans. Gareth Gollrad (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 225.

[80]David Tracy, "Afterword: A Reflection on Mystics: Presence and Aporia," in Michael Kessler & Christian Sheppard, eds., *Mystics: Presence and Aporia*, trans. Gareth Gollrad (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 241.

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NEW EVANGELIZATION TODAY

Exploring Key Themes and Asian Links

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In Catholic conversation, the term "new evangelization" appears frequently these days. Pope Benedict XVI, in his message for World Mission Day in October 2011, notes that the Church has the urgent duty to proclaim the Gospel in "new situations" that "require a new evangelization." The pope continues: "This task has not lost its urgency. On the contrary, 'the mission of Christ the Redeemer, entrusted to the Church, is still far from being accomplished …. We must commit ourselves with all our energies in its service (RM 1)'." The pope states clearly the scope of the mission of evangelization: "The universal mission involves all, everywhere, and always."

In an apostolic letter dated October 12, 2010, Benedict XVI established a special Vatican agency for the promotion of "new evangelization." This pontifical council has the task of combating the "de-Christianization" of countries that were first evangelized centuries ago. The pope warns of a progressive detachment from religious faith in a wide variety of countries. The new council is to aim at encouraging a clearer understanding of the faith and helping to "remake the Christian fabric" of human society.

The pope identifies a variety of factors in the weakening of religious faith: advances in science and technology, the widening of individual

freedom and lifestyle choices, profound economic changes, the mixing of cultures and ethnic groups brought about by migration, and the growing interdependence among peoples. Such changes have brought benefits for many people, but they have often been accompanied by "a troubling loss of the sense of the sacred." Undoubtedly, a "new evangelization" is urgently needed, and Benedict XVI also determined that the topic for the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (2012) was to focus on the challenges of the "new evangelization."

This succinct mission catechesis aims at exploring some of the defining traits that characterize the "new evangelization." The topic is extremely broad and rather complex. Thus, this presentation seeks only to describe and present the topic; other discussions are needed to fully analyze the situation and to propose concrete pastoral and mission approaches. To facilitate a clear presentation, this author draws on the writings of several experts (references are found in the bibliography). After a discussion of evangelization in general, ten characteristics of the "new evangelization" will be identified; for each trait the author will show its linkages to three pivotal anchors: a) the Second Vatican Council, b) recent popes, and c) the Church in Asia.

Readers will certainly note that the ten defining traits that characterize the new evangelization (selected by this writer) are very similar to important themes discussed during the Second Vatican Council; this is more than a simple coincidence. In fact, this writer finds himself in *full agreement* with a statement by Benedict XVI (September 20, 2012): "We can say that the new evangelization started precisely with the Council, which Blessed John XXIII saw as a new Pentecost …." Indeed, a lengthy discussion on the interconnections would prove most enlightening; yet, for the purposes of this piece, this presentation is admittedly no more than the briefest of introductions to the broad and multifaceted topic of "new evangelization."

Exploring Evangelization. The term evangelization is a generally unfamiliar and relatively new concept for many Catholics; only recently has it been gaining wider appreciation. Due to the influence of the Second Vatican Council as well as recent popes, evangelization is now located at the center of the Church's identity and mission—at least theoretically

and theologically. These sources have contributed to an understanding of evangelization in all its rich, complex, multifaceted, and interrelated dimensions. Today, evangelization is necessarily viewed holistically and integrally.

The word "evangelization" is not found in the New Testament; however, *euaggelion* 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 (II Cor. 4:4); it is for all (Mk. 13:10; 16:15); it is a revelation of God (Gal. 1:11–12) which is to be believed (Mk. 1:15) and proclaimed (I 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 (II Tim. 1:10), of the risen Christ (I Cor. 15:1ff; II Tim. 2:8), and of salvation (Eph. 1:13). Pope Francis cites more than a dozen New Testament passages that speak of joy and the Good News (*Evangelii Gaudium* 5).

Vatican II speaks of mission and evangelization in a variety of contexts: it is especially the bishops' task to promote evangelization by the faithful (CD 6); it is associated with the mission of the laity (AA 2, 6, 20, 26; LG 35); priests are to learn the methods of evangelization (PO 19); the Eucharist is the source and summit of all evangelization (PO 5). The Decree on Missions (AG) 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); catechists have an important task to evangelize (17), as do the laity (21); the call to evangelize arises from a charism of the Spirit (23); 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).

Pope Paul VI (1963–1978), who specifically chose the name Paul to indicate his evangelistic vision for the Church, 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 the second millennium of Christianity. Without a doubt, EN is 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 enthusiastically engage 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. Although Paul VI did not use the term "new evangelization," his writings, especially *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, boldly address the topic of evangelization in the modern world.

Karol Jósef Wojtyla was elected pope on October 16, 1978 and took the name John Paul, clearly identifying himself with the two popes of Vatican II. Under his leadership, the papal ministry became focused on evangelization and global mission: he traveled to numerous countries, strengthened local Christian communities, encountered followers of other religions, spoke on the social teachings of the Church, canonized saints and honored blesseds, and met with youth and government leaders. Saint John Paul II asserted that the Second Vatican Council set the direction for his papacy. His eighth encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* (RM), was issued on December 7, 1990; it celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of Vatican II's Mission Decree *Ad Gentes* and the fifteenth anniversary of Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. In RM, the pope sounds a clarion call to all Church sectors to renew their enthusiasm and commitment to evangelize the world.

John Paul II first mentioned the term "new evangelization" in a speech he gave at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on March 9, 1983. He declared that the fifth centenary of the beginnings of evangelization of the Americas (1492–1992) should be marked by the beginning of a new era of evangelization, an era which is "new in ardor, methods, and expression." Although the term "new evangelization" was originally used in 1968 by the Latin American bishops meeting at Medellín in their "Message to the Peoples of Latin America," it was John Paul II who gave further clarity and precision to the term through his many speeches, encyclicals, and other documents. Indeed, Saint John Paul II (1978–2005) was enormously effective in promoting evangelization through a wide variety of approaches.

In light of this background from scripture, Vatican II, Paul VI, and John Paul II, this presentation, relying on various authors and sources (especially A. Dulles), now turns to a succinct discussion of ***ten defining traits*** that characterize the new evangelization.

1. Centrality of Christ. The Second Vatican Council sought to link its teachings into the tradition of the Church through *ressourcement* (a return to foundational sources). It employed biblical language and had a clear focus on Christ and the Church. The Council recognized a clear "hierarchy of truths" that placed Christ the Son of God at its highest level (UR 11).

Paul VI spoke clearly of the centrality of Christ: "There can be no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed" (EN 22). For John Paul II, the proclamation of the mystery of Christ "lies at the heart of the Church's mission and life, as the hinge on which all evangelization turns" (RM 44).

Pope Francis emphasizes Christ's centrality in *Evangelii Gaudium:* "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day" (EG 3). "The primary reason for evangelizing is the love of Jesus which we have received" (EG 264). "Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people" (EG 268).

The Church in Asia declares: "To bear witness to Jesus Christ is the supreme service which the Church can offer to the peoples of Asia, for it responds to their profound longing for the Absolute, and it unveils the truths and values which will ensure their integral human development" (*Ecclesia in Asia* 20). The Church in Asia seeks to give credible witness to Christ: "Her one ambition is to continue his mission of service and love, so that all Asians 'may have life and have it abundantly' (Jn. 10:10)" (EA 50).

2. Ecumenism. In its document on ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), Vatican II called upon all Christians to bear witness to their common hope (UR 12). The Council also noted that the divisions

among Christians are a serious hindrance to the preaching of the Gospel and an authentic witness of life (UR 1).

Paul VI wrote of the importance of the search for Christian unity; he sought to emphasize "the sign of unity among Christians as the way and instrument of evangelization" (EN 77). In his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint,* John Paul II noted that it is impossible to authentically proclaim the Gospel which speaks of reconciliation if, at the same time, one is not concerned for reconciliation among Christians (UUS 98). Pope Francis reflects: "Commitment to ecumenism responds to the prayer of the Lord Jesus that 'they may all be one' (Jn. 17:21). The credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions" (EG 244).

During the Asian Synod (1998), the Synod Fathers "acknowledged that 'the scandal of a divided Christianity is a great obstacle for evangelization in Asia.' In fact, the division among Christians is seen as a counter-witness to Jesus Christ by many in Asia who are searching for harmony and unity through their own religions and cultures" (EA 30). In Asia, "ecumenical dialogue and interreligious dialogue constitute a veritable vocation for the Church" (EA 29).

3. Interreligious Dialogue. The Second Vatican Council issued an entire document on the relationship of the Church with the followers of other faiths (*Nostra Aetate*).

> The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions …. The Church therefore has this exhortation for her sons and daughters: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these people, as well as the values in their society and culture. (NA 2)

Popes Paul VI and John Paul II find no essential conflict between proclamation and authentic interfaith dialogue. Perhaps his greatest affirmation of the importance of dialogue is Pope Paul VI's first encyclical letter *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) which is heavily devoted to dialogue as a pathway for the Church. One decade later in 1975, he reiterated the

Church's profound respect for other religions, but noted that this respect does not imply that the Church would refrain from the proclamation of Jesus Christ (EN 53).

John Paul II devotes three full sections (55–57) of *Redemptoris Missio* to exploring relations with the followers of other religions. "Interreligious dialogue is part of the Church's evangelizing mission …. Dialogue is not in opposition to mission *ad gentes;* indeed, it has special links with that mission and is one of its expressions" (RM 55). "Each member of the faithful and all Christian communities are called to practice dialogue" (RM 57).

Pope Francis asserts:

> Evangelization and interreligious dialogue, far from being opposed, mutually support and nourish one another …. In this dialogue, ever friendly and sincere, attention must always be paid to the essential bond between dialogue and proclamation, which leads the Church to maintain and intensify her relationship with non-Christians. (EG 251)

"Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities" (EG 250).

In Asia, where less than three percent of the population is Christian, the Church actively promotes interfaith dialogue. "Since the Council the Church has consistently shown that she wants to pursue that relationship in a spirit of dialogue …. The dialogue which the Church proposes is grounded in the logic of the Incarnation" (EA 29). "It is therefore important for the Church in Asia to provide suitable models of interreligious dialogue—evangelization in dialogue and dialogue for evangelization—and suitable training for those involved" (EA 31).

4. Religious Freedom. The promotion of new evangelization actually presupposes a full acceptance of the Council document on religious freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae.* The Church asserts that "free exercise of religion in society" is a value "proper to the human spirit" (DH 1). All persons are encouraged to follow their responsible judgment in conscience without external pressure.

Paul VI is eloquent on this topic in *Evangelii Nuntiandi:*

> It would certainly be an error to impose something on the consciences of our brethren. But to propose to their consciences the truth of the Gospel and salvation in Jesus Christ, with complete clarity and with total respect for the free options which it presents—"without coercion, or dishonorable or unworthy pressure"—far from being an attack on religious liberty, is fully to respect that liberty, which is offered the choice of a way that even non-believers consider noble and uplifting. (EN 80)

Similarly, John Paul II affirms a respectful proclamation of the Gospel. "On her part, the Church addresses people with full respect for their freedom. Her mission does not restrict freedom but rather promotes it. *The Church proposes; she imposes nothing.* She respects individuals and cultures, and she honors the sanctuary of conscience" (RM 39).

Recalling the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization, Pope Francis notes: "The Synod Fathers spoke of respect for religious freedom, viewed as a fundamental human right. This includes 'the freedom to choose the religion which one judges to be true and to manifest one's beliefs in public'" (EG 255). "We also evangelize when we attempt to confront the various challenges which can arise. On occasion these may take the form of veritable attacks on religious freedom or new persecutions directed against Christians …. This not only harms the Church but the fabric of society as a whole" (EG 61).

The Church in Asia calls upon governments

> to recognize religious freedom as a fundamental human right … [and she invokes the words of Vatican II, noting that] the human person has a right to religious freedom. Such freedom consists in this, that all should have such immunity from coercion by individuals, or by social groups, or by any human power, so that no one should be forced to act against his conscience in religious matters, nor prevented from acting according to his conscience, whether in private or in public, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits. (EA 23)

5. Evangelization—A Multifaceted Process. Vatican II noted: "The split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age"

(GS 43). Thus, the preaching of the Gospel needs to be tailored to various situations and groups of people. "Indeed, this accommodated preaching of the revealed Word ought to remain the law of all evangelization" (GS 44).

Paul VI constantly promoted a very comprehensive understanding of the evangelization process. He noted: "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" (EN 17). The evangelization process needs constant nuancing so that it will effectively reach people in the concrete situations of their lives. The call for a "new evangelization" reflects the dynamic and ever-changing challenges the Church's mission encounters.

In the thought of John Paul II, one can distinguish three situations of evangelization. There is the "first evangelization" among groups or socio-cultural contexts where Christ and his Gospel are not known. Next, there is the phase of pastoral care of Christians seeking to live their faith more fully. Finally, there is the situation where people have lost their sense of the faith; "in this case what is needed is a 'new evangelization' or 're-evangelization'" (RM 33). Succinctly, the pope affirms that "missionary activity *ad gentes* [is] different from the pastoral care of the faithful, and the new evangelization of the non-practicing" (RM 37).

Francis, our present pope, appreciates the need to view evangelization holistically as he speaks about "the authentic and integral meaning of the mission of evangelization" (EG 176). Evangelization, "the task of the Church" (EG 111), needs to address the entire human family "with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses" (EG 183). Francis quotes Paul VI, noting that "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"; it is directed to "all men and the whole man" (EG 181).

During the Asian Synod it was affirmed:

> The presentation of Jesus Christ as the only Savior needs to follow a *pedagogy* which will introduce people step by step to the full

> appropriation of the mystery. Clearly, the initial evangelization of non-Christians and the continuing proclamation of Jesus to believers will have to be different in their approach. (EA 20)

The participants of the Asian Synod stressed "the need to evangelize in a way that appeals to the sensibilities of Asian peoples, and they suggested images of Jesus which would be intelligible to Asian minds and cultures and, at the same time, faithful to Sacred Scripture and Tradition" (EA 20).

6. Social Teaching. Vatican II affirmed that Catholics must always be "attentive to the common good as related to the principles of the moral and social teaching of the Church" (AA 31). Christians are called to involve themselves in temporal affairs so that "the social order and its development will unceasingly work to the benefit of the human person" (GS 26). The Church's social teaching and involvement spring from the profound realization that "God's Spirit, who with a marvelous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the earth, is present within these human developments" (GS 26).

Consistent with an integral vision of evangelization, Paul VI affirms that "the Church links human development and salvation in Jesus Christ, but she never identifies [equates] them" (EN 35).

> The Church considers it to be undoubtedly important to build up structures which are more human, more just, more respectful of the rights of the person and less oppressive and less enslaving, but she is conscious that the best structures and the most idealized systems soon become inhuman if the inhuman inclinations of the human heart are not made wholesome. (EN 36)

Thus, she continually promotes her moral and social teaching.

John Paul II consistently emphasizes Church social teaching and involvement. He notes that there are many places "where action on behalf of integral development and human liberation from all forms of oppression are most urgently needed" (RM 58). The pope affirms: "Authentic human development must be rooted in an ever deeper evangelization" (RM 58). As a force for liberation and development, the Church focuses on the human person, realizing that "*Man is the principal agent of development*" (RM 58).

Francis seeks to address "certain social issues of great importance for the future of humanity" and to "make explicit once again the inescapable social dimensions of the Gospel message" (EG 258). Francis admits that although "the Church does not have solutions for every particular issue," she continues "to propose in a clear way the fundamental values of human life and convictions which can then find expression in political activity" (EG 241). "It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country" (EG 184).

Church reflection from the Asian context on social involvement is insightful.

> The social doctrine of the Church, which proposes a set of principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and directives for action, is addressed in the first place to the members of the Church. It is essential that the faithful engaged in human promotion should have a firm grasp of this precious body of teaching and make it part of their evangelizing mission. (EA 32)

7. Evangelization of Cultures. One entire chapter of the Vatican II document on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes,* is given to the proper development of culture (53–62). The Council notes:

> There are many links between the message of salvation and human culture. For God, revealing Himself to His people to the extent of a full manifestation of Himself in His Incarnate Son, has spoken according to the culture proper to different ages …. The Church, sent to all peoples of every time and place … can enter into communion with various cultural modes, to her own enrichment and theirs too. (GS 58)

Paul VI, in his exhortation on evangelization, devotes an entire section to the topic of the evangelization of cultures. He asserts:

> What matters is to evangelize human culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way as it were by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots) …. Therefore, every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. (EN 20)

Probably a penetrating evangelization of cultures stands at the heart of the "new evangelization" project.

In his mission encyclical, John Paul II speaks of various cultural sectors, and he terms them "the modern equivalents of the Areopagus" (RM 37). During the time of Saint Paul, the Areopagus represented the cultural center of the learned people of Athens; "today it can be taken as a symbol of the new sectors in which the Gospel must be proclaimed" (RM 37). In a word, the evangelizing mission of the Church must integrate its message into the "new culture" created by the numerous profound changes in contemporary human society.

For his part, Pope Francis notes: "It is imperative to evangelize cultures in order to inculturate the Gospel"; this will mean "sparking new processes for evangelizing culture" (EG 69). This task demands recognizing that "new cultures are constantly being born" and that "the changes taking place in these great spaces [cities] and the culture which they create are a privileged locus of the new evangelization" (EG 73). Thus, "through inculturation the Church introduces peoples together with their cultures into her own community" (EG 116). In this process, she is aware that "the faith cannot be constricted to the limits of understanding and expression of any one culture" (EG 118).

Once again, mission reflection from Asia on the topic of culture is replete with helpful insights:

> In the process of encountering the world's different cultures, the Church not only transmits her truths and values and renews cultures from within, but she also takes from the various cultures the positive elements already found in them. This is the obligatory path for evangelizers in presenting the Christian faith and in making it part of a people's cultural heritage. (EA 21)

This entire process of evangelizing culture and promoting inculturation "has a special urgency today in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural situation of Asia, where Christianity is still too often seen as foreign" (EA 21).

8. Social Communication. Avery Cardinal Dulles has asserted that the key traits which are included in the challenge of "new evangelization" and which are being presented here have roots in the discussions and documents of the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II, in its document on the instruments of social communication *Inter Mirifica*, notes:

> The Catholic Church has been commissioned by the Lord Christ to bring salvation to everyone, and is consequently bound to proclaim the Gospel. Hence, she judges it part of her duty to preach the news of redemption with the aid of the instruments of social communication, and to instruct humanity as well in their worthy use. (IM 3)

With clarity, Paul VI noted the great influence of mass media on the world today. He writes:

> Our century is characterized by the mass media or means of social communication, and the first proclamation, catechesis, or the further deepening of the faith cannot do without these means …. When they are put at the service of the Gospel, they are capable of increasing almost indefinitely the area in which the Word of God is heard …. In them she finds a modern and effective version of the pulpit. (EN 45)

In his mission encyclical, John Paul II speaks at length about the "world of communication." He asserts:

> Since the very evangelization of modern culture depends to a great extent on the influence of the media, it is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church's authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the "new culture" created by modern communications. This is a complex issue … [and it involves] new ways of communicating, with new languages, new techniques, and a new psychology. (RM 37)

Pope Francis admits that "we are living in an information-driven society" (EG 64). We appreciate "the steps being taken to improve people's welfare in areas such as health care, education and communications" (EG 52). These changes in the communications media demand two responses. "We need to distinguish clearly what might be a fruit of the kingdom from what runs counter to God's plan" (EG 51). We must also "attempt to put all things in a missionary key" and discern how we can more effectively "communicate the message" in "today's world of instant communication" (EG 34).

The comprehensive vision of evangelization put forth in *Ecclesia in Asia* observes:

> Inevitably, the Church's evangelizing mission too is deeply affected by the impact of the mass media …. The exceptional role played by the means of social communication in shaping the world, its cultures

> and ways of thinking has led to rapid and far-reaching changes in Asian societies …. The Church needs to explore ways of thoroughly integrating the mass media into her pastoral planning and activity, so that by their effective use, the Gospel's power can reach out still further to individuals and entire peoples, and infuse Asian cultures with the values of the Kingdom. (EA 48)

9. Responsibility of All Christians. An older vision of mission and evangelization often saw that mission responsibility was the special concern of priests and sisters, apostolic associations, or various missionary orders of women and men. While these groups remain committed to their founding charism, the Second Vatican Council insisted that "the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature" (AG 2) and that "the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God" and everyone must "do their share in missionary work among the nations" (AG 35). In a word, the Church is missionary "from top to bottom" and involves everyone—bishops, priests, sisters, laity, and youth.

For Paul VI, "it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole" (EN 15). The pope devoted one entire chapter of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* to the "Workers for Evangelization" (59–73). Thus, the commission to spread the Gospel is given to the universal Church (61), the local Churches (62), the pope (67), bishops and priests (68), religious (69), the laity (70), the family (71), and young people (72). One should find in the Church a variety of "diversified ministries" (73)—all at the service of missionary evangelization.

Similar to Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, one finds an entire chapter on "Leaders and Workers in the Missionary Apostolate" in John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* (61–76). Several of the same groups noted by Paul VI are mentioned by John Paul II; however, he devotes special sections to "life-long" *ad gentes* missionaries (65–66), diocesan priests (67), contemplatives (69), missionary religious sisters (70), catechists (73), episcopal conferences (76), and the Pontifical Mission Societies (84). Thus, since "all Christians share responsibility for missionary activity," "missionary cooperation" becomes an imperative as diverse communities and individuals share and exercise their "right and duty" of evangelization (RM 77).

Pope Francis asserts emphatically that as "the whole Church takes up the missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception" (EG 48). He says that the 2012 Synod "reaffirmed that the new evangelization is a summons addressed to all" (EG 14) and that "missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*" (EG 15). Again, he writes:

> all of us are called to take part in this new missionary "going forth." Each Christian and every community must discern the path the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel. (EG 20)

Ecclesia in Asia recognizes the multiple and diverse contributions of missionaries over the centuries. During the "Asian Synod" (1998), the Synod Fathers took advantage of the occasion

> to express in a very special way their gratitude to all the missionaries, men and women, religious and lay, foreign and local, who brought the message of Jesus Christ and the gift of faith. A special word of gratitude again must be expressed to all the particular Churches which have sent and still send missionaries to Asia. (EA 20)

In the same document, John Paul II noted that the challenge still remains: "I cannot fail to urge the Church in Asia to send forth missionaries, even though she herself needs laborers in the vineyard" (EA 44).

10. Role of the Holy Spirit. Vatican II and its program of *aggiornamento* bring to the fore the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church, a dimension underemphasized in many earlier presentations of mission. *Ad Gentes,* the Council's Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, pointed out that the Spirit unceasingly accompanies and guides the Church in her apostolic activities. The Spirit "furnishes the Church with various gifts, both hierarchical and charismatic. He vivifies ecclesiastical institutions as a kind of soul and instills into the hearts of the faithful the same mission spirit which motivated Christ himself" (AG 4). This same Spirit often anticipates the evangelizer's action, opening people's hearts to the Gospel message.

Pope Paul VI is eloquent when presenting the role of the Holy Spirit in missionary activity.

> Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit …. In fact, it is only after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that the Apostles depart to all the ends of the earth in order to begin the great work of the Church's evangelization …. Techniques of evangelization are good, but even the most advanced ones could not replace the gentle action of the Spirit …. It must be said that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization …. Through the Holy Spirit the Gospel penetrates to the heart of the world. (75)

Saint John Paul II devotes an entire chapter in *Redemptoris Missio* (21–30) to the pivotal role of the Spirit in evangelization. All mission is "a sending forth in the Spirit" (22). The Spirit gives assurance that evangelizers "will not be alone in this task" (23). From the Spirit the apostle receives "the ability to bear witness to Jesus with 'boldness'" (24). "The Spirit's presence and activity affect not only individuals, but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions" (28). "Whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions, serves as a preparation for the Gospel" (29). Again, John Paul II reiterates that the Spirit is "the principal agent of mission" (30).

"Keeping our missionary fervor alive," Pope Francis asserts, "calls for firm trust in the Holy Spirit, for it is he who 'helps us in our weakness' (Rom. 8:26) …. There is no greater freedom than that of allowing oneself to be guided by the Holy Spirit …. The Holy Spirit knows well what is needed in every time and place" (EG 280). "The Holy Spirit works as he wills, when he wills, and where he wills …. Let us learn to rest in the tenderness of the arms of the Father …. Let us keep marching forward; let us give him everything, allowing him to make our efforts bear fruit in his good time" (EG 279).

In the multicultural and pluri-religious Asian context, the action of the Spirit is paramount. "The Spirit gathers into unity all kinds of people, with their different customs, resources, and talents, making the Church a sign of the communion of all humanity …. [Thus] the Holy Spirit is the prime agent of evangelization" (EA 17). "The Church looks to the Holy Spirit to continue to prepare the peoples of Asia for the saving dialogue with the Savior of all …. Committed to being a genuine sign and instrument of the Spirit's action in the complex realities of Asia …,

the Church ceaselessly cries out: Come, Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love" (EA 18).

Conclusion. This presentation of ten defining traits that characterize the "new evangelization" may appear overwhelming to readers. Yes, the task of evangelization in the contemporary world is genuinely complex and awesomely challenging. Indeed, no individual can hope to accomplish any more than a small fragment of the total task. Thus, it is imperative that all segments of the Church collaborate in this beautiful endeavor, believing that, as John Paul II affirmed, "God is preparing a great springtime for Christianity …. Christian hope sustains us in committing ourselves fully to the new evangelization and to worldwide mission" (RM 86).

In 1975, Paul VI issued two interrelated apostolic exhortations: *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World) and *Gaudete in Domino* (On Christian Joy). The pope constantly asserted that if the Gospel is not heard from "joyful evangelizers," it will not be heard at all by contemporary humanity. The lack of joy and hope is an obstacle to effective evangelization. Paul VI believed that joy would enable the world of our time

> to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the Kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world. (EN 80) [cf. EG 10]

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* directly quotes the two interrelated exhortations issued by Paul VI in 1975 (*Gaudete in Domino* receives two quotes and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is mentioned more than a dozen times). Echoing Paul VI, declared Blessed on World Mission Sunday (October 19, 2014), Francis asserts that "the Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus …. With Christ joy is constantly born anew …. I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy" (EG 1). It is only "joyful evangelization" that bears much fruit, and Francis asks

that this "definite style of evangelization" be adopted by Christians "*in every activity which you undertake*" (EG 18).

The success of the "new evangelization" undoubtedly requires "renewed evangelizers." Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote: "Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God." Joy is convincing; joy evangelizes. All the complex dimensions of the "new evangelization" will not overwhelm those whose lives have been transformed by a joyful encounter with the Risen Lord. We must listen frequently to the admonition of Saint Paul: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near" (Gal. 4:4). Be transformed by joy. Become a herald of the new evangelization! Surrender to the "Lord of Joy" for he is *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*!

Common Abbreviations

AA: *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Laity)

AG: *Ad Gentes* (Missionary Activity)

CD: *Christus Dominus* (Bishops)

DH: *Dignitatis Humanae* (Religious Freedom)

DV: *Dei Verbum* (Divine Revelation)

EA: *Ecclesia in Asia* (Church in Asia [John Paul II])

EG: *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel [Francis])

EN: *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization Today [Paul VI])

GD: *Gaudete in Domino* (On Christian Joy [Paul VI])

GS: *Gaudium et Spes* (Church Today)

IM: *Inter Mirifica* (Social Communications)

LG: *Lumen Gentium* (Church)

NA: *Nostra Aetate* (Non-Christian Religions)

PO: *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Priests)

RM: *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of the Redeemer [John Paul II])

SC: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Sacred Liturgy)

UR: *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Ecumenism)

UUS: *Ut Unum Sint* (That All Be One [John Paul II])

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THE PARABLE OF THE HEIFER IN HOSEA 10:11–13

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.

A parable is a succinct didactic story narrated to illustrate a particular lesson or truth. Christian readers are mostly familiar with Jesus' parables in the New Testament, but the Hebrew Bible (OT) has its own share of parables. They appear often as narrative prose: e.g., 2 Sam. 12:1–4 (Parable of the Ewe Lamb); 2 Sam. 14:5–7 (the Two Brothers Fighting); 1 Kgs. 20:39–40 (the Escaped Prisoner). Isaiah's Vineyard Song (Isa. 5:1–2) is a good example of a parable in verse form (also the Lioness and Her Whelps in Ezk. 19:2–9 and the Parable of the Vine in Ezk. 19:10–14).

When a parable employs mythical creatures, animals, plants, and inanimate objects that are anthropomorphized as characters in the story, it is further classified as a fable: e.g., Judg. 9:8–15 (the Trees Choose a King); 2 Kgs. 14:9 (the Thistle and the Cedar); Ezk. 17:3–8 (the Great Eagles and the Vines).

Interpreting Hos. 10:11–13 as a parable or fable of the heifer, rather than just an extended farming metaphor without a storyline (plot),[1] may be the key to unlocking the prophet's message.

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[1]J. L. Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, Subsidia Biblica 13 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico,

[A]	ואפרים עגלה מלמדה אהבתי לדוש ואני עברתי על־טוב צוארה	11	*Ephraim is a trained heifer* *that likes to thresh.*[2] *I laid a yoke*[3] *on her good neck.*
	ארכיב אפרים יחרוש יהודה ישדד־לו יעקב:		*I shall harness Ephraim* *Judah shall plough* *Jacob shall harrow for himself.*
[B]	זרעו לכם לצדקה קצרו לפי־חסד נירו לכם ניר	12	*Sow for yourselves in accord with ṣəḏāqâ!* *Reap in accord with ḥeseḏ!* *Till for yourselves a virgin soil!*
	ועת לדרוש את־יהוה עד־יבוא וירה צדק לכם:		*It is time to seek YHWH* *until he comes and rains ṣeḏeq on you.*
[C]	חרשתם־רשע עולתה קצרתם אכלתם פרי־כחש	13	*You have ploughed wickedness.* *Injustice you have reaped.* *You have eaten the fruit of deceit …*

The parable is enveloped by historical recollections of violent incidents in Gibeah (v. 9) and Beth-Arbel (v. 14). The reference to Gibeah probably recalls the shameful deed committed by the Benjaminites against a visiting Levite which provoked a tribal reprisal

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1990), 17–38; S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible,* JSOT Sup. Ser. 70 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 93–140.

[2]BDB, 12: the MT אהבתי is a feminine singular active participle with a remnant of the old genitive case ending *-î* (cf. Zech. 11:17 *'zby hṣ'n*). The definite article is sometimes omitted in a relative clause whose antecedent is expressed (A. B. Davidson, *Introductory Hebrew Grammar: Syntax*, 3rd ed. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896], 191–193, #143). According to A. R. Guenther, the heifer is quoted in v. 11a "I love to thresh" (אהבתי לדוש) (*Hosea* [Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998], 9).

[3]The MT ואני עברתי על־טוב צוארה ("I crossed upon her good neck") does not make sense. Most likely the verb עבר is *piel* ("to put, lay"), and *'ul* (yoke) has been assimilated to the preposition *'al* (upon). B. C. Birch supports the NRSV translation "I spared her fair neck" (*Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, Westminster Bible Companion [Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997], 94).

(Judg. 19–20).[4] The atrocity in Beth-Arbel, which seems to point to a more recent past, has not been recorded elsewhere in the Bible.[5]

Despite many textual obscurities, Hos. 10:9–15 can be comprehended to speak of war and its evil consequences. Aside from מלחמה (war) which is mentioned in vv. 9 and 14, many other words illustrate a battle: v. 10 אסף על (to gather against), v. 13 גבורים (warriors), v. 14 שאון (tumult), מבצר (fortification), שדד (to devastate), שׁד (havoc), רטשׁ (to dash), and v. 15 נדמה (to be cut off).

The main accusation against Israel is its propensity to make war "since the days of Gibeah" (v. 9). Because the people trusted in the strength of their warriors, the violence of war shall engulf and destroy them (vv. 14–15). The irony of it all is that sin brings its own punishment: war, which is often resorted to as a means of national survival, carries the seed of the nation's destruction.

Midway through the pericope, the topic of war is interrupted by a parable about the nation (vv. 11–13). The didactic story uses graphic farming motifs (e.g., a working animal, plough, sow, harrow, reap, harvest, eat) combined with abstract ethico-religious concepts (e.g., *ṣəḏāqâ*, *ḥeseḏ*, *dāraš*, *ṣeḏeq*, iniquity, injustice, lies) to portray the nation's moral character. When the topic of war is resumed in v. 13de, it is pretty obvious that the root cause of all violence is the failure to uphold God's instructions.

The parable comes in three scenes: A) The *first scene* presents Ephraim as a heifer being harnessed for work in the field (v. 11). In 4:16, Hosea has already employed the figure of a stubborn cow (סררה פרה) to describe the nation. But here "a trained heifer that likes to thresh" (עגלה מלמדה אהבתי לדושׁ) is a more apt description of a farming

[4]P. M. Arnold, "Hosea and the Sin of Gibeah," *CBQ* 51 (1989): 305–311.

[5]D. J. Simundson, *Hosea, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 83; M. A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets* Vol. 1, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 111.

animal.[6] The heifer (עגלה) is here intended primarily as a character in the parable. Perhaps it is also meant to allude to the idolatrous bull-images disparagingly called "calves" in Hos. 10:5 (עגלות), 13:2 (עגלים), and 8:5–6 (עגל).[7] The laying on of the yoke (עבר על) has been interpreted by some commentators as a symbol of punishment, particularly the exile.[8] Such an interpretation is premature for it ignores the whole dynamics or plot of the parable in which the result of the nation's work is seen only in the end. The heifer's good neck (טוב צוארה) most likely

[6]Other occurrences of *lmd* for a trained animal are in Jer. 2:24; 31:17; Sir. 51:17. M. H. Goshen-Gottstein proposes a link between the Ugaritic *mdl* and the Hebrew *lmd* ("'Ephraim Is a Well-Trained Heifer' and the Ugaritic *mdl*," *Bib* 41 [1960]: 64–66). According to H. Simian-Yofre, מלמדה may refer to Ephraim's responsibility for having knowledge of the law (*El Desierto de los Dioses: Teología e Historia en el Libro de Oseas* [Cordoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1993], 143).

[7]G. Morris thought that "any reference to a calf (עגל) might refer, however obliquely, to Israel's calves at Dan and Bethel" (*Prophecy, Poetry and Hosea*, JSOT Sup. Ser. 219 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 95). E. K. Holt believes Hosea is using here a well-known feature from Canaanite cult to repudiate it: "The fair heifer (the symbol for the Ugaritic goddess Anat, now representing Israel) is removed from the threshing floor (i.e., fertility cult) and placed instead in Yahweh's service" (*Prophesying the Past: The Use of Israel's History in the Book of Hosea*, JSOT Sup. Ser. 194 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 89). E. Ben Zvi also argues that "within a patriarchal society such as the one for which the book was written, such an explicit feminization of the statue/idol representing the high deity might be understood as polemical and even derogatory" (*Hosea* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2005], 212). However, the idol of Samaria in Hos. 8:5–6 is depicted as a male calf (עגל; also Hos. 13:2 עגלים). The issue in Hos. 10:9–15 is not idolatry or apostasy but Israel's propensity for war and violence.

[8]T. E. McComiskey, "Hosea," in T. E. McComiskey, ed., *The Minor Prophets—An Exegetical and Expository Commentary* Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing House, 1992), 176. D. K. Stuart interprets the "yoke" as the covenant which YHWH imposed upon Israel (*Hosea-Jonah*, Word Biblical Commentary 31 [Waco, Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1987], 169).

refers to a firm and robust neck (cf. מלמדה), rather than a soft and fair one that is unaccustomed to the yoke.[9]

V. 11cd expresses the intention of God who plays presumably the role of the farmer: "I shall harness Ephraim; Judah shall plow; Jacob shall harrow for himself." The names Ephraim, Judah, and Jacob designate collectively the one heifer rather than three different characters in the story. The verbs חרשׁ (to plow) and שׂדד (to harrow) represent various tasks in the farming technology to be accomplished by the heifer. The statement "for/by himself" (לו) underlines the responsibility assigned to the animal (=nation); the farmer's role, on the other hand, recedes from the scene.

B) The *second scene* is an instruction given on how to accomplish the task (v. 12abc): "Sow for yourselves in accord with ***ṣəḏāqâ***; reap in accord with ***ḥeseḏ***; till for yourselves a virgin soil!" Although the parable continues to use agricultural metaphors (sow, reap, till), the figure of the heifer has now been abandoned in favor of a progressive disclosure within the story of the real actors: heifer → nation → you. The revelatory technique here may not have the same dramatic impact as Nathan's parable (2 Sam. 12:1–9) or Isaiah's Vineyard Song (Isa. 5:1–7), but it certainly draws the listeners (pl. "you") closer to the parable.

The triple imperatives found at the beginning of each line change the whole tenor of the parable from narration to instruction. "Sowing" is often used figuratively for an action that is intentional or rampant. When combined with an object denoting either a vice or a virtue, זרע becomes a suitable idiom for moral behavior, e.g., "sow discord" (Prov. 6:14, 19, 28); "sow righteousness" (Prov. 11:18); "sow iniquity" (Prov. 22:8). The word-pair "sow/reap" often stands in a cause-and-effect relationship to express the idea of an act and its natural or "just" consequence, e.g., "Because they sow the wind, they will reap

[9]U. Cassuto compares the Ugaritic ***lsmsm(t).bmt.phl*** ("on the comely back of a donkey") found in the *Aqhat* Cycle (Gor. 51:IV:15; 1 Aq 60) with the description of the heifer in Hos. 10:11 (*The Goddess Anath* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971], 29).

the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7); "He who sows injustice will reap calamity" (Prov. 22:8).[10] However, the statement in Hos. 10:12ab is somewhat different from the above idiom in that זרע / קצר do not govern צדקה / חסד as direct objects. The prepositions ל[11] / לפי (like על פי; כפי; אל פי) have a normative sense: לצדקה = "in accord with *ṣəḏāqâ*"; לפי־חסד = "in accord with the norm of *ḥeseḏ*" (cf. Isa. 32:1 for a similar usage). The virtues of *ṣəḏāqâ* and *ḥeseḏ* are to be the guidelines that must govern the action of the people. נירו לכם ניר ("'Till for yourselves an untilled soil") stresses the people's accountability for their own action: they must do the work by/for themselves (לכם in v. 12ac parallels לו in v. 11e) on a ground that has not yet been tilled by others. ניר also alludes to an idle land that has not been cultivated with *ṣəḏāqâ* and *ḥeseḏ* for a long time.

In v. 12de, Hosea sets the parable aside to expound in plain language the significance of the moral injunction: "It is time to seek YHWH until he comes and showers *ṣeḏeq* on you" (וירה צדק לכם ועת לדרוש את־יהוה עד־יבוא).[12] Because the verb דרשׁ has a wide range of meaning (e.g., "to seek, ask, demand, investigate, consult, interpret, etc."), its specific sense has to be deduced from the context.[13] The object את־יהוה defines the usage here of דרשׁ as theological rather than legal.[14] Although דרשׁ (like בקשׁ) can sometimes mean "inquiring (an

[10]In the case of injustice or sometimes due to divine punishment, *sow/reap* are found in an adversative relationship (*sow* … *but reap* …) to express a disproportionate result (Mic. 6:15; Jer. 12:13; Hag. 1:6; Ps. 126:5; Job 4:8).

[11]Some take the *l-* here as a direct-object marker, but its parallelism with *lpy-* does not endorse such a view. Emending *py-* to *pry-* ("fruits") in order to allow *l-* to be read as a direct-object marker only introduces a textual problem where there is none.

[12]D. Williams, "Hosea 10:12," *Rev Exp* 90 (1993): 257–262.

[13]S. Wagner, "דרשׁ *dāraš*, מדרשׁ *midrash*," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. 3, eds. G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1978), 293–307.

[14]In late Biblical Hebrew, דרשׁ has become part of the legal terminology: e.g., Dt. 12–26 uses דרשׁ for a juridical inquiry; in Ezekiel (20:40; 33:6;

oracle) of God"[15] especially in cult,[16] there is no hint that that is what is meant here. The previous instruction to follow the norms of ***ḥeseḏ*** and ***ṣəḏāqâ*** suggests rather that God has to be sought in moral life, i.e., in the ordinary course of one's dealings with others.

In the eighth century prophetic literature, "seeking God" is focused primarily on summons to repentance. "Seek YHWH and live" (דרשו את יהוה וחיו) in Amos 5:4–7 is an appeal to conversion so as to forestall the coming destruction of the House of Joseph. Amos' call is aimed at an inner transformation (not ritual performance; cf. v. 4 "seek not Bethel … enter not Gilgal") of those "who turn justice (משפט) to wormwood and cast down righteousness (צדקה) to the earth." Amos 5:14, which substitutes ***tôb*** for God as the object of דרש ("seek goodness … that you may live!"), seems to explain the moral implication of "seeking God" (cf. Mic. 6:8).[17] "Seek justice" (דרשו משפט) in Isa. 1:17 is also part of a bid to renew life (cf. v. 16 "Wash yourselves clean … remove evil … learn to do good").[18] Thus, when Hosea invites the nation to

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34:10) and the Priestly source (Gen. 9:4–6; 42:22), it also has the sense of a legal requirement.

[15]Gen. 25:22; 1 Sam. 9:9; 1 Kgs. 14:5; 22:7f; 2 Kgs. 1:16; 3:11; 8:8; 16:6f; 22:13, 18; 2 Chr. 16:12; 20:3; 34:21, 26; Ps. 34:5; Job 5:8; Jer. 21:2; 37:7; Ezk. 14:7, 10; 20:1, 3.

[16]Isa. 58:2; 1 Kgs. 22:7f; 1 Chr. 13:3; 2 Chr. 16:6f; 20:3; 34:3.

[17]Some exegetes regard Amos 5:14 as a later interpretation of Amos 5:4–5 (A. Weiser, *Die Prophetie des Amos* [Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1929], 183–194; N. H. Snaith, *Amos, Hosea, and Micah* [London: Epworth, 1956], 93; W. Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten*, 2nd ed., HKAT III/4 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903], 145; H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, Hermeneia, trans. W. Janzen, et al. [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977], 250). Many, however, accept the authenticity of the passage (J. L. Mays, *Amos*, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969], 99–102; W. Rudolph, *Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, KAT 23/2 [Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1971], 93; J. Lust, "Remarks on the Redaction of Amos V 4–5.14–15," *OTS* 21 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981], 129–154).

[18]J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 98–99; H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, trans. T. H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress,

"seek God," he reflects a contemporary concern for repentance, for an ethical regeneration of the nation, the urgency and timeliness of which is conveyed so well by the word עת: "it is *time* to seek YHWH."[19]

"Seeking God" (i.e., repentance) has to be relentlessly pursued "until he comes and showers *ṣeḏeq* on you" (עד־יבוא וירה צדק לכם). God's coming (בוא) marks the beginning of salvation, the bestowal of favor upon his people (cf. Hos. 6:3 "He will come to us as a spring rain"). Likewise, the onset of the seasonal rain (ירה is used here as a verb) symbolizes God's fidelity and blessings on those who seek him by living according to his will. Note that "rain" still belongs to the agricultural metaphors used in the parable.

God's blessing is expressed by the word צדק, which is clearly meant to reciprocate the people's צדקה (v. 12a). *Ṣeḏeq* and *ṣəḏāqâ*[20] have a very broad semantic range: from legal uses (justice, impartiality, legitimacy, acquittal) to proper order and comportment (righteousness, fairness, honesty, propriety) to God's saving action (military success, rescue of people in distress, restoration of a just order in society, reestablishment of legitimate cult, future salvation).[21] The exact nuance of these words must be deduced from the context.

1991), 49–50. O. Kaiser suspects a Deuteronomistic reworking of the traditions in Isa. 1:10–17 (*Isaiah 1–12*, OTL, trans. J. Bowden [London: SCM Press, 1983], 27–28).

[19]According to A. Fanuli, "Il tempo della permanenza d'Israele nel Canaan doveva esere visto come un continuo *Kairós* di Iahvè: un tempo cioè di costante invite a vivere nella ricerca (*dāraš*) della volontà de assistenza, benedizione, salvezza (*ṣeḏeq*) …" (*Osea-Michea* [Brescia: Editrice Queriniana, 1984], 83).

[20]Some scholars make a distinction between צדק and צדקה. A. Jepsen claims that צדק designates the proper social order, while צדקה is used for the right human attitude or behavior ("צדק and צדקה im Alten Testament," in fs. W. W. Herzberg, hrsg. H. G. Reventlow, *Gottes Wort und Gottes Land* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965], 78–99, esp. 79–81). The same distinction is followed by H. H. Schmid, *Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 40 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1968), 67, 179.

[21]H. G. Reventlow, *Rechtfertigung im Horizont des Alten Testaments*, BEvTh 58 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1971); F. Crüsemann, "Jahwes Gerechtigkeit

Since צדק here is attributed to God's action (ירה), the word can only mean salvation directed to the well-being of the nation. Because the whole context of Hos. 10:9–15 speaks about war and its destructive consequences, God's saving deed may take the concrete form of rescuing the nation from the ravages of war, or reestablishing peace and order in the community. The only other occurrence of צדק in Hosea (2:21–22 "I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and mercy … in faithfulness") associates the word with the other covenantal blessings of משפט, חסד, רחמים, and אמונה.[22] Although these verses are regarded as a later addition, they conform to Hosea's view that God will answer the nation's need in time of repentance (cf. 2:17, 21ff; 6:1–3; see also Isa. 1:17). Conversely, Mic. 6:5–8 invites the people to recall YHWH's saving deeds (צדקות), and then to reciprocate by "doing justice (משפט), loving kindness (חסד), and walking humbly (הצנע) with God."

The צדקה demanded of the people (v. 12a // v. 12b חסד) refers to acting justly towards other people. In Isaiah, *ṣəḏāqâ* occurs twelve times (8x // משפט)[23] as a moral rectitude governing social relationships. The same meaning can be deduced from Amos 5:7. Furthermore, *ṣəḏāqâ* (like *ḥeseḏ*) may also pertain to a proper relationship with God: a person's righteousness before the Lord.

C) The *third scene* presents the actual result of the work assigned to the nation: "You have ploughed iniquity; you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies." The words חרש (to plow), קצר (to reap), including אכל (to eat the produce), resume the agricultural parable. The first two verbs have already been used in the preparation and

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(צדקה / צדק) in Alten Testament," *EvTh* 36 (1976): 427–450. For the history of research, see B. Mogensen, "צדקה in the Scandinavian and German Research Tradition," trans. F. H. Cryer, in K. Jeppesen & B. Otzen, eds., *The Productions of Time: Tradition History in the Old Testament Scholarship* (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1984), 67–80.

[22]צדק / צדקה are often found in word-fields (Ps. 33:5; 36:1, 11; 40:10–12; 72:1–3; 85:10–14; Isa. 40–66 *passim*.

[23]Isa. 1:27; 5:7, 16; 9:6; 28:17; 32:16, 17; 33:5.

instruction for work, and so here it is just a matter of reporting what has already happened (note the perfect tenses). Instead of working in conformity with צדקה and חסד, the people have done iniquity (רשׁע), injustice (עולתה), and lies (כחשׁ). These vices obviously reflect the prevailing culture of war and violence (v. 13de). There is a tint of irony in the statement, because those who made war ("ploughed iniquity") are now made to suffer its evil consequences ("have reaped injustice and eaten the fruit of lies").

Thus the parable ends in a tragic note: Israel has not repented and has failed to live up to the moral demands of *ṣəḏāqâ* and *ḥeseḏ*. As a consequence, "… the tumult of war shall rise against your people, and all your fortresses shall be destroyed, as Shalman destroyed Beth-Arbel on the day of battle when mothers were dashed in pieces with their children" (v. 14).[24]

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[24]M. L. Ruffin speculates that the incident at Beth-Arbel may refer to an occurrence during the invasion of Shalmeneser or by Salamanu of Moab ("Unwrapping the Prosperity Package," in C. P. Stanton, ed., *Hosea for Teaching and Preaching* [Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1993], 121).

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Landas 28:2 (2014) 115–141

PAUL: A MISOGYNIST?

Miriam R. Alejandrino, O.S.B.

This article examines Pauline texts (1 Cor. 7; 11:2–16; the "household codes" in Col. 3:18–4:1; Eph. 5:21–6:9; 1 Tim. 2:8–15; Titus 2:1–10) which may portray Paul as a misogynist. It also presents some Pauline texts (Acts 16:11–15, 40; 18:2, 18; Rom. 16:1–16; 1 Cor. 16:19; Phil. 4:2–3; Col. 4:15) which speak positively of women. Our aim is to understand the Pauline view on women and evaluate whether Paul's thoughts are still of value to our present context.

Paul's writings, however, do not offer a systematic presentation of his thoughts. Through various topics he exhorts his churches to practice a more intense Christian life. In his expositions, he combines elements of revelation, fragments of the primitive kerygma, teachings of Christ, interpretations of the Old Testament, and his personal understanding of the Christ-event. Paul's letters have been composed in response to concrete problems. To understand and synthesize Paul's thought, we must read his letters in their respective historical contexts.

This article thus employs diachronic as well as synchronic approaches in the study of the relevant texts. In the first part, we determine Paul's historical and socio-cultural background in order to understand better what he meant when he wrote to the early Christians. The second part is a literary analysis of the pertinent texts. Our diachronic and synchronic analyses will allow us to ascertain what

Paul's theology and ethical exhortations meant for his original audience. We will conclude by evaluating them, for a theology is incomplete if it does not produce a coherent ethics grounded on *religious* principles.

The Historical and Socio-Cultural Background of Paul[1]

Paul himself claims that he was a Hebrew/Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin.[2] He thinks and expresses himself in Old Testament categories and images, and quotes from the LXX. The composition of his letters in Greek and his style betray a good Greek education, often revealing the influence of Greek rhetoric.[3] Paul frequently uses images derived from the Greek urban culture. He makes use of Greek legal terms as well as commercial (Philemon 18) and political terminologies (e.g., Phil. 1:17; 3:20). He alludes to Greek games (Phil. 2:16; 1 Cor. 9:24–27). He mentions the Hellenistic slave trade (Gal. 3:15; 4:1–2; Rom. 7:1) and celebrations in honor of a visiting emperor (1 Thess. 2:19). He also subscribes to the Hellenistic ideas of "freedom" (Gal. 5:1, 13), which may have influenced his ethical teaching.[4]

It was his encounter with Christ on the way to Damascus that turned Paul the Pharisee into an apostle.[5] This experience gave Paul a deep insight into the mystery of Christ, making him the first Christian theologian.

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[1]For an extensive exposition of the world and mindset of Paul, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology," in *Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), 802–805; J. M. Callewaert, *The World of Saint Paul*, trans. M. J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2011); and N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, Parts I & II, Christian Origins and the Question of God (Great Britain: SPCK, 2013).

[2]Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5; Gal. 1:14; 2 Cor. 11:22.

[3]Hans Deter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 14.

[4]Betz, *Galatians*, 16.

[5]Acts 9; 22; 27 and Galatians 2 recount Paul's conversion.

From his earliest letters (1 Thess. 2:13–14; cf. Rom. 1:16; 2:9–10), Paul reveals an awareness of the privileged position of his fellow Jews in the divine plan of salvation. In Rom. 9–11 he wrestles with the problem of the role of Israel in the Father's new plan of salvation by grace and through faith in Christ Jesus. But he knows that he has been called to preach to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15–16); he calls himself an "apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13).

Paul admits that he is "a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians" (Rom. 1:14). His teaching on the Church as the "body" of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27–28) is almost certainly influenced by the contemporary Greco-Roman understanding of the state as the body politic. The problems that Paul himself encountered in founding and governing individual churches are almost certainly responsible for his gradual awareness of what the "church" meant in a transcendent, universal sense.

Paul reflects on theological issues while at the same time he copes with the social and ethical problems of his day, e.g., with immorality, misbehavior in worship, civil status in society, and conflicting teachings of various Christian preachers.

Controversial Texts on Women

1 Corinthians[6]

Historical and Socio-Cultural Background[7]

Corinth was an ancient Greek city destroyed by the Romans in 146 BCE. It was rebuilt as a Roman colony by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE.

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[6]In his book *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), K. E. Baily attempts to show that the rhetorical styles of 1 Corinthians can be traced to the writing prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures and the culture of the eastern Mediterranean world.

[7]For a description of Corinth and its historical background, see Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. James Limburg, et al., Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 151.

As the capital of Achaia, Corinth was the center of commerce with two ports[8] and convenient land transportation. A cosmopolitan city of mixed cultures and religions, it attracted people of various social classes: rich and poor, free citizens and slaves. Many traders from all over the Mediterranean world came to the city for trade.

Corinth was strongly influenced by the Greco-Roman culture in which women had little or no freedom at all. They were expected to get married at a young age, and once married, they belonged to their husbands.

Like any flourishing port city, Corinth was famous for its prostitutes and courtesans with their particular mode of dress and hairstyle. Prostitutes were known to keep their hair loose and adorned with ornaments, while courtesans kept theirs closely cropped. This could be the reason for Paul's insistence that women should cover their heads when they pray and prophesy in order to avoid discrimination.

Analysis of pertinent texts

1 Cor. 7:1–26, 32–35. Paul advocates marriage rather than celibacy because of the immorality of the Corinthians (5:1–13; 6:13b–20). However, Paul's personal ideal is the asexual life and unmarried state. He identifies himself with the celibates whom he says have a special gift (7:8, 27, 38, 40). He says that unmarried people can serve God single-mindedly without being encumbered with family problems (7:32–35). Such a position would have been considered exceptional because the Roman Empire encouraged marriage and big families for political reasons. Widows and divorcees of both sexes were expected by the state and society to remarry. Paul's advice to remain free from the marriage bond was thus an attack on the intentions of the State,

[8]Cenchreae; Aegean to the East and Lechaeum; Ionian/Adriatic Sea to the West; see Robert L. Hohfelder, "Cenchreae," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. 1, A–C (New York / London / Toronto / Sydney / Auckland: Doubleday, 1992), 881.

especially for people who lived in urban centers of the Roman Empire.[9] It was also a form of rebellion against the wishes of fathers who had authority over their daughters. Paul's injunction on young widows not to marry was unheard of at that time, and it gave women freedom which their foremothers never had.[10]

In verses 3–4, Paul exhorts the husband "to give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does." Paul stresses the rights and responsibilities of both sexes and the equality of man and woman whether they remain single or married. He does not intend to enslave either woman or man but to give them the freedom to make choices.

1 Cor. 11:2–16.[11] This section serves as an introduction to Paul's instruction on correct behavior during the pneumatic worship of the community as described in chapters 11–14. Paul concludes in 14:40 with the exhortation, "But all things should be done decently and in order."

Paul starts with a theological argument that uses a descending hierarchy of creation: God-Christ-Man-Woman. For Fiorenza,[12]

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[9]Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 225.

[10]According to Fiorenza, "… his (Paul's) advice to women to remain non-married was a severe infringement of the right of the *paterfamilias* since, according to Roman law, a woman remained under the tutorship of her father and family, even after she married" (*In Memory of Her*, 225).

[11]On 1 Cor. 11:2–16 as an interpolation, see W. O. Walker, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul's View Regarding Women," *JBL* 94 (1975): 94–110; Lamar Cope, "1 Cor 11:2–16: One Step Further," *JBL* 97 (1978): 435–436. On arguments against this idea, see J. Murphy-O'Connor, "The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16?," *JBL* 95 (1976): 615–621; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482–500; J. P. Meier, "On the Veiling of Hermeneutics (1 Cor 11:2–16)," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 212–226.

[12]Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 229.

Paul's argument focuses on "glory" and climaxes with hair as the woman's glory (verse 15a). Thus, the first directive of Paul is on head coverings.[13] He resorts to nature to emphasize his point: when praying or prophesying men should not have a head covering, whereas women should wear a veil. Paul's argument thus is for correct worship rather than a theological principle on who is head or chief.[14] Fiorenza explains:

> … Paul does not argue in 11:2–16 for the "creational" or "symbolic" *difference* between women and men despite their equality in Christ, but for the custom to bound-up hair, as the symbol of women's prophetic-charismatic power.[15]

S. Bedale[16] claims that κεφαλὴ in verse 3 never connotes authority or superiority. For Bedale, "source" is the only appropriate meaning here. H. Schlier[17] claims that κεφαλή in verse 4 means the whole person. Other ancient manuscripts and patristic witnesses[18] read κάλυμμα (veil) instead of ἐξουσίαν (literally, "freedom of choice, right to act, decide, or dispose of one's property as one wishes")[19] in verse

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[13]On the wearing of flowing and unbound hair in Isis cult as a possible background of the Pauline texts, see S. Kelly Heyob, *The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 60.

[14]Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," 497f.

[15]Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 230.

[16]Stephen Bedale, "The Meaning of *kephalē* in the Pauline Epistles," *JTS* 5 (1954): 211–215.

[17]Heinrich E. Schlier, "κεφαλὴ in the New Testament," in *TDNT* 3: 679; see also Murphy-O'Connor, "The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16?," 619.

[18]See Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), 459.

[19]William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 277.

10. Some scholars[20] interpret ἐξουσίαν in the active sense as power over the woman's head, wherein "head" has a double meaning, namely, the actual head and man as the head of women (verses 3ff).

The angels in verse 10 refer to the "guardians of the created order" who are acknowledged as participants in God's worship. According to Jewish and Christian apocalyptic theology, angels mediate the words of prophecy.[21]

Paul affirms very clearly the interdependence of man and woman in verses 11–12—one cannot exist without the other, and both are equally dependent on God who is their source: "… in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God."

Such an affirmation strongly corrects any hierarchical implications of his earlier argument. It is important to note that the issue is not about hierarchy or man's authority over woman but about correct order of worship (verses 4–5 and 13).

In verse 16, Paul was referring to a custom which other churches did not have. In a culture where women and slaves did not count, Paul's preaching on freedom for all, including women and slaves, was revolutionary. Women could be single if they so wished; they could preach and prophesy, and married women could have freedom of movement.

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[20]E.g., Bedale, "The Meaning of *kephalē* in the Pauline Epistles," 213f; M. D. Hooker, "Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor xi.10," *NTS* 10 (1964/1965): 410–416; A. Feuillet, "Le sign de puissance sur la tête de la femme (I Cor xi.10)," *NRT* 55 (1973): 945–954.

[21]In the New Testament, see e.g., the Book of Revelation chapters 7–11. For a commentary on these, see Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Apokalypsis and Propheteia: The Book of Revelation in the Context of Early Christian Prophecy," in J. Lambrecht, ed., *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, BETL 53 (Grembloux: Duculot / Leuven University Press, 1980), 105–128.

It could be that this newfound freedom was misused by some individuals, for in verses 2 and 16 Paul talks about a tradition and custom that he had handed down to them. Paul discusses the behavior of both women and men during worship, thereby affirming that both women and men share in the gifts of the Spirit.[22]

Paul's injunctions are for both women and men. But Paul was especially emphatic in his instructions for women since their authority and independence were new experiences that needed to be guarded lest they be abused or misused.

1 Cor. 14:33–36. Although Pauline authorship of this text is debated,[23] we shall examine it because of our canonical approach to the Pauline literature. In the context of chapters 12–14, 14:33–36 is part of Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to observe decency and order during worship rather than exercise individual pneumatic inspiration.[24] The purpose of Paul's instruction is to "build up the church" (verses 5 and 12). In content, verses 33b–36 seem to contradict 11:2ff, where the active participation of women is presupposed.

1 Cor. 14:33–36 is best understood in the context of a church order with rules for a glossolalist (vv. 27ff), prophets (vv. 29–33), and wives (vv. 34–36).[25] It should be noted that verses 34–36 are addressed only

[22]Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 229.

[23]Some scholars argue that 1 Cor. 14:33–36 was a post-Pauline interpolation, e.g., G. Fitzer, *Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde*, TEH 110 (Munich: Kaiser, 1963); Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 246; A. Feuillet, "La dignité et le role de la femme d'après quelques textes pauliniens," *NTS* 21 (1975): 162–170.

[24]A. B. Spurgeon ("Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14," *BiblSac* 168:671 [2011]: 317–333) proposes that the imperatives in these verses should be taken as "permissive imperatives," that is, Paul was sanctioning an ongoing situation that he felt should continue: "Women are to continue to remain silent, continue to submit, and continue to ask questions of their family." This alternative sees a situation in which Corinthian women hesitated to speak in front of unrelated men because of their cultural upbringing.

[25]On the structure of these rules, see Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 230.

to wives of Christians, not to all women. The reason given by Paul why they should keep silence in the churches, and if there is anything they wish to know, they should instead ask their husbands at home, is for proper behavior (verse 35b). Paul gives a theological reason for this in verse 36.[26]

Fiorenza gives a socio-cultural explanation:

> … within the Christian worship assembly, wives had dared to question other women's husbands or point out some mistakes of their own during the congregational interpreting of the Scriptures and of prophecy. Such behavior was against all traditional custom and law. However, the text does not say that wives should subordinate themselves either to the community leadership or to their husbands. It asks simply that they keep quiet and remain subdued in the assembly of the community.[27]

Summary

Paul's injunction on women in 1 Corinthians has to be seen in the light of the prevailing cultic decorum in that society. He affirms that women in the Christian community are equal with men in terms of their right and ability to preach and prophesy (11:2–16). However, Paul was very strict about orderly worship; therefore, he enjoins wives not to raise questions during their public worship (14:34–36).

In the texts examined above, Paul gives instruction regarding the correct form of worship, which has to be orderly. Fiorenza sees a missionary aspect in these Pauline texts:

> Paul's interests … are missionary and not directed against the spiritual freedom and charismatic involvement of women in the community … he subordinates women's behavior in marriage and worship assembly to the interests of Christian mission, and restricts their rights not only as "pneumatics" but also as "women …"[28]

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[26]For a possible Jewish-Hellenistic background of this argument, see Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 231f.

[27]Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 232.

[28]Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 236.

"Household Codes" in Colossians 3:18–4:1; Ephesians 5:21–6:9; 1 Timothy 2:8–15; Titus 2:1–10

Historical and Socio-Cultural Background

The Pauline "household codes" describe Christian obligations of members of the *familia* in the Greco-Roman world. Scholars vary in their opinions on the origin of Paul's "household codes."[29] Some trace their beginnings to early Christianity, while others trace them to the Hellenistic synagogues.[30] Philo's and Josephus' traditions connect the topic of the household to the larger topics of the state and the classical Greek philosophers.[31] Whatever their origin—whether pagan, or Jewish, or Christian—they are characterized by the dominant patriarchal orientation of the family.[32]

During the first century, Greco-Roman culture claimed that the father had almost absolute legal power over his children. Hellenistic Jewish writings stressed the status and authority of parents. The Greco-

[29]For an extensive discussion on the origin and function of the household codes, see J. E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafeln*, FRLANT 109 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 9–36, and his own conclusion on pages 146–151; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, Sacra Pagina Vol. 17 (Collegeville, Minneapolis: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 159–169.

[30]Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafeln*, 95–101.

[31]As discussed in D. L. Bach, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981) and in a review of the pertinent issues in "Household Codes" in D. E. Aune, ed., *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 25–50.

[32]Carol L. Meyers, however, explains that ancient Israel should not be called a patriarchal society, for the term "patriarchy" is an inadequate and misleading designation of the social reality of ancient Israel. She proposes the concept of *heterarchy*, which "concedes the existence of hierarchies but does not situate them all in a linear pattern. Rather it acknowledges that different power structures can exist simultaneously in any given society …" (Carol L. Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?," *JBL* 133 [2014]: 27).

Roman tradition of *paterfamilias* considered the male as head of the family; thus, he had all authority and power over the household.[33]

In Greco-Roman culture, wives, children, and slaves were expected to accept the religion of the *paterfamilias*. Religious groups that attracted women and slaves were particularly seen as likely to be subversive of societal stability. As women and slaves joined the new Christian movement in large numbers, it too became an object of suspicion and criticism.

Timothy M. Willis claims that:

> There is evidence that there were slight regional differences, which reflect competing Hellenistic and Roman practices. There are indications, e.g., that women were more involved in public life in the Roman West than the Hellenistic East, and there was less separation of roles along gender lines in the West.[34]

Margaret Y. MacDonald explains:

> The household codes are ethical ideals and do not tell the whole historical story; they need to be understood in light of the realities of an emerging Christianity in competition with their social groups and subject to hostility from others.[35]

Regulation for the household was deemed essential for the good order of the family, the basic unit of society. Although life in Christian households had its distinctive religious motivations, it provided a good model for those concerned with virtue in Greco-Roman society. As a consequence, the Christian household was no longer considered subversive but within the bounds of received wisdom.

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[33]Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Letter to the Colossians: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," in *NIB* Vol. XI (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 665.

[34]Timothy M. Willis, "Family," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 2, 427–430.

[35]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 169.

Issues about freedom and enthusiasm could have created major problems in Paul's mission and ministry. The special focus he gave on the inclusivism of the gospel which attracted many slaves and women could have posed a threat to the orderliness of the Church both in worship and in social issues. His insistence that Jewish Christians should not expect Gentile Christians to live like Jews (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 12:13, and Col. 3:11) must have further generated longing for their full acceptance in the Church. Moreover, the new Christian understanding of equality must have come into conflict with the patriarchal households. Hence, the household codes might have been written for the purpose of putting order and stability in the Christian households.

Analysis of pertinent texts

Col. 3:18–4:1. This section is an exhortation to wives, husbands, children, fathers, and slaves. Husbands, fathers, and masters are given a dominant role while wives, children, and slaves have a subordinate role.[36]

The verb ὑποτάσσεσθε used in 3:18[37] is the same verb found in Eph. 5:21.[38] It means "to submit," to take a subordinate role in relation to another person.[39] The motivation given to the Colossians is "as is fitting in the Lord" (verse 18). Subordination is appropriate for members who confess Christ as Lord. The patriarchal marriage pattern is reinforced and given a Christological aspect. Husbands are exhorted to love their wives and "never treat them harshly" (verse 19).

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[36]Lincoln, "Colossians," 551–669.

[37]For a cultural background of this verse, see MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 152f.

[38]In Titus 2:5 and 1 Peter 3:1, the word means "to obey."

[39]Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 1897f.

The social composition of the churches addressed, as described in 3:22–4:1, shows that there were more slaves than owners.[40] Verse 22a literally refers to "earthly masters." There is a shift of its meaning in verse 22b–24, where it refers to Christ. This must be a reminder to earthly masters that they have a heavenly master. The motivation given for Christian slaves to be obedient to their earthly masters is "fear of the Lord" (3:22), who gives the inheritance as reward (3:24).[41]

This early Christian adaptation of the household code assumes the hierarchical structure of the master/slave relationship, and has a view of justice that does not attempt to change social structures but to improve and transform conditions within them.[42]

Eph. 5:21–6:9. This section opens with the exhortation "Be subject[43] to one another out of reverence for Christ" (5:21). Here Paul addresses both husband and wife, asking them to be subject to one another—for Christian households this is a new order which stresses reciprocity and mutual responsibility rather than subordination in marital relationship. The motivation given is Christological.[44]

The husbands are commanded three times (5:25, 28, and 33) to love their wives. In 5:25, husbands are not only to love their wives but they must also be prepared to give their lives for their wives as Christ gave His life for the Church. Husbands are to love their wives as they love their own bodies (5:28). However, Fiorenza claims that

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[40]According to MacDonald, "… the conversion of women and slaves who were part of pagan households was a source of tension between church communities and the outside world" (*Colossians and Ephesians*, 162).

[41]See Col. 1:12 on what this inheritance refers to.

[42]Lincoln, "Colossians," 658.

[43]The Greek word ὑποτασσόμενοι also has a military nuance, that is, "to line up"; it can also mean "to assign." For the meaning in its cultural and literary context, see MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 152f.

[44]However, Fiorenza argues that "the cultural-social structures of domination are theologized and thereby reinforced" (Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 270).

> the code and its theological legitimation are not descriptive of the actual situation of women and slaves in the communities of Asia Minor. It is exhortative or prescriptive and seeks to establish a Christian behavior that is not yet realized in the life of the Christians in Asia Minor.[45]

Margaret Y. MacDonald explains that

> The primary purpose of Ephesians 5:21–6:9 is to provide a theological justification and motivation for the subordination of wives, children, and slaves to the head of the household.[46]

1 Tim. 2:8–15. In this section, ἀνήρ in verse 8 and γυνή in verses 9–12 can mean "husband and wife." The wives' dress and appearances should be "chastely" (verse 9). Paul asks for "good deeds" instead of adornment (verse 10). The specific focus is on one's comportment during the gatherings for worship (verses 8–12).[47] The warning presupposes the presence of some well-to-do women who find satisfaction in costly attire.

Paul's motive must have been to conform church order to that of the well-ordered household (hence, read 3:4–5, 12). In verses 13–14, Paul seems to be bending before social conventions. The relation described in verse 15 is between husband and wife. The focus of concern is husband and wife, not man and woman in general.[48] The admonition had in view the good functioning of the society's basic household unit, formed around husband and wife.[49]

This passage is significant because it affirms the relationships that maintain the strength of marriage and the stability of the household.

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[45]Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 270.

[46]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 341.

[47]The same context of worship as described in 1 Cor. 11:12–16.

[48]Benjamin Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Sacra Pagina Vol. 12 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 64–67.

[49]James D. G. Dunn, "1 Timothy," in *NIB* Vol. XI (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 773–788.

Principles of strong marriage and stable household remain fundamental to a Christianity that looks back to Gen. 2:24 as the most fundamental model for intimate human relationships.[50]

Titus 2:1–10. After telling Titus to "teach what is consistent with sound doctrine" (verse 1), Paul gives him instruction on what to teach various members of the household (verses 2–10): e.g., older men, older women, young women, young men, and slaves. Good household management is a test of leadership and a model for good church management.[51]

The older men (πρεσβύτας)[52] are aged between 50–60 years old. They are exhorted "to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance" (verse 2). Σώφρονας means literally "self-controlled, sensible, prudent."[53]

The older women (πρεσβύτιδας[54]) are told "to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good" (verse 3). Their teaching role is in reference to younger women. It is their responsibility to pass on to the next generation the wisdom gained through the years. The role of the matriarch within the household is to encourage the wives of the household "to love their husbands, to love their children" (verse 4).

The main concern here is that the Christian message should produce behavior that would commend it to others: "so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our savior" (verse 10). In this case, we see that theology and ethics are interdependent.

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[50]Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 786.

[51]Dunn, "Titus 2:1–10," 861–880.

[52]Masculine, accusative, plural form of πρεσβύτης.

[53]Liddell & Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1751.

[54]Feminine noun, accusative, plural form of πρεσβῦτις.

Summary

In the letters to the Colossians and Ephesians, the following pairs are addressed: wives and husbands; fathers/parents and children; masters and slaves. In 1 Tim. 2:8–15 and Titus 2:1–10, married couples as well as slaves are addressed. In all these texts, the subordinate person (either the wife, or the child, or the slave) is asked to obey the dominant person (either the husband, or the father, or the master). The dominant person in each category is asked to do certain things, depending on what role he takes. Paul gives a new teaching to the dominant person while the subordinate person is asked to conform to the norms of society.

In Col. 3:18 and Eph. 5:21, the wives are asked to subordinate themselves to their husbands, not to all men. It is interesting to note that the Greek verb used here is ὑποτάσσω ("to be subject, subordinate"), in the imperative passive (be subject!) or in the passive participle (being subject), suggesting a continual activity which wives themselves must do. Paul does not tell husbands to insist that their wives perform this "duty."

This request for subordination is applied not only to wives, but also to children and slaves. In the case of these two other groups, the imperative ὑπακούετε (obey!) is used in Col. 3:20, 22 and Eph. 6:1, 5 to indicate their submission.

It has been argued[55] that the primary purpose of the household codes was apologetic and missionary. They showed that the Christian teachings did not subvert the traditional hierarchies and roles in the family and society. On the contrary, they upheld and fostered the socially acceptable submissive behavior in the Christian household which attracted converts to the faith.

[55]Ruth B. Edwards, *The Case for Women's Ministry* (London: SPCK, 1989), 63.

Women in the Ministry of Paul

1) Priscilla[56] in Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19

Priscilla and Aquila were a wife and husband team in the new community of Jesus. Priscilla was Roman, of noble birth, while Aquila was a Jew, a native of the Roman province of Pontus. When Claudius ordered the Jews to leave Rome, they moved to Corinth were they started a house church.[57] Both accompanied Paul to Ephesus and met Timothy there. When Paul left Ephesus, they remained there and instructed Apollos about the new way.

Paul paid them the highest compliment by calling them "my co-workers who risked their life for me" and saying that "all the Gentile churches are grateful to them." Wherever they settled, they started a house church. In the list of greetings in Romans 16, theirs is the only group designated as a "church" (*ekklesia*). Priscilla was a church leader, missionary, apostle, and teacher of a missionary apostle, Apollos.

Collins explains: "That Prisca's name appears first than that of Aquila might … be an indication of her superior status, otherwise it might be a reflection of her greater role in the Christian mission."[58]

2) Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4:2–3

Paul said that Euodia and Syntyche struggled with him to advance the gospel. He ranked them alongside Clement and other co-workers.

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[56]For a discussion that Priscilla and Prisca refer to the same person, see Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 151.

[57]On the background and activities of Aquila and Prisca, see Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, Sacra Pagina Vol. 7 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 608ff; and Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, Sacra Pagina Vol. 6 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 452.

[58]Collins, *First Corinthians*, 609.

Paul said that the names of the two women are in the book of life. Most probably they were leaders of a house church in Philippi. At one time, the two had some disagreement between them, and their dissension was affecting the life of the congregation not only in Philippi but also in the wider Church.[59] Paul pleaded with them to reconcile. He regarded them important enough such that he sent an emissary to help mediate the reconciliation.

3) Lydia in Acts 16:11–15, 40

Lydia was a businesswoman who came from Thyatira[60] in Asia Minor and lived in Philippi. She was a seller of dyed goods for which her city was famous. She herself traded in purple cloth, a luxury item which indicated her wealth and influence.[61] A "worshipper of God" (σεβομένη τὸν θεόν), i.e., a Gentile convert to Judaism, she was with a group of Jewish women who came together to pray. On the Sabbath day, Paul went to the place of prayer and met Lydia and other women. After listening to Paul, she became a Christian, the first in Europe to be baptized along with her household.

Paul accepted her invitation to stay at her home, where she provided hospitality and financial support to Paul and his companion. The Church in Philippi began with her conversion and Lydia would have been the leader in her house church. House churches were important to the missionary movement, for they provided a meeting place for the liturgies of the Word and Eucharist.

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[59]Bonnie B. Thurston & Judith M. Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon*, Sacra Pagina Vol. 10 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2005), 140–142.

[60]Thyatira was a famous center for the purple dyeing industry; see Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 130.

[61]Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 491–492. For an opinion that Lydia belongs to the marginalized in Philippi, see I. Reimer, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 102–109.

4) Nympha in Colossians 4:15

Nympha was a Christian woman[62] in Asia Minor to whom Paul sent greetings at the end of his letter to Colossae. The letter says that a church (ἐκκλησία) met in her house. She herself must have been a leader and Paul thought her important enough that he sent her greetings. According to Margaret Y. MacDonald,

> Nympha no doubt played a key leadership role in the churches of the Lycus Valley …. The reference to Nympha comes as a reminder that the adoption of traditional ethics in church groups did not negate all avenues for women's influence.[63]

5) Several Women in Romans 16:1–16

Paul commends Phoebe, τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, οὖσαν [καὶ] διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς (verse 1). She must have been a leader in the church at Cenchreae in the eastern port of Corinth. Her being a deaconess of a congregation suggests that she held an ecclesial office.[64] She is said to have delivered Paul's letter to Rome.[65] "If … this letter was really proclaimed orally and interpreted on the spot by the bearer, Phoebe would have had considerable rhetorical skill and experience in theological exposition."[66]

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[62]On a discussion on whether Nympha is a masculine or feminine name, see E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1979), 309. This article follows the proposal of MacDonald (*Colossians and Ephesians,* 183) that Nympha is a woman.

[63]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 188.

[64]B. W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 125; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 916.

[65]Byrne, *Romans*, 447.

[66]Miriam Therese Winter, *Woman Word* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 228.

She was a leader who provided personal care and hospitality to many, including Paul. Paul gave her two titles: ἀδελφή (sister) and διάκονος, translated as "deacon" or "deaconess" or "servant." Διάκονος is the same word Paul used to describe himself. Byrne claims that "Paul's commendation of Phoebe is an important indication of the leadership roles exercised by women in the early communities."[67]

Mary[68] was a Jewish woman who Paul said had been working hard, πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν, for the Lord (v. 6). Some translate[69] πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν as "much labor," suggesting that Mary was one of the earliest members of the church in Rome who greatly influenced its organization.

Andronicus and Junia,[70] another husband and wife team, were co-workers of Paul and had been in prison with him. Unfortunately, Junia had been given a "sex change" sometime in the 13th century and most Bibles name her as Junias, making her a male.[71] This is probably because Paul describes her and her husband as "prominent among the apostles" (v. 7). John Chrysostom said of Junia: "To be an apostle is something great. But to be outstanding among them, just think what a wonderful encomium that is! How great this woman's devotion to learning must have been that she was worthy of the title apostle."[72]

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[67]Byrne, *Romans*, 448.

[68]For a discussion on her origin, see Byrne, *Romans*, 453.

[69]John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* Vols. I & II, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 229.

[70]Another version has "Junias," the masculine form. However, R. S. Cervin ("A Note Regarding the Name 'Junia(s)' in Romans 16.7," *NTS* 40/3 [1994]: 464–470) demonstrates that the name is indeed feminine.

[71]For more discussion on this issue, see B. Brooten, "'Junia … Outstanding among the Apostles' (Romans 16:7)," in L. Swidler & A. Swidler, eds., *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Documents* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 141–144; Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 168–172, 178–183; R. R. Schulz, "Romans 16:7: Junia or Junias?," *ExpTim* 98 (1986–1987): 108–110.

[72]Quoted in Edwards, *The Case for Women's Ministry*, 23.

Tryphaena and Tryphosa (v. 12) may have been sisters.[73] Paul said they worked hard in the Lord, τὰς κοπιώσας ἐν κυρίῳ. Persis, whom Paul calls "the beloved," is also said to have worked hard for the Lord. Paul used the Greek verb κοπιάω (to work very hard)[74] to refer to a ministry of the gospel and to describe his own apostolic ministry. It is a word associated with preaching, evangelism, and a leadership which commands authority. These women to whom Paul sends greetings were engaged in such a ministry in Rome.[75]

Julia and Philologus (v. 15) were another pair mentioned by Paul. Julia might be the wife of Philologus, and Nereus and his sister could be their children.[76] Whatever their relationship might be, Julia and Nereus' sister would have contributed in some way to the church in Rome or may have been outstanding members of the church there.

Summary

Was Paul a misogynist? J.-C. Havyarimana explains:

> Far from being a misogynist, Paul was an engaged feminist who did all he could to elevate women's status in society and in the church. But he was misinterpreted and betrayed later by those who did not like his pro-women views because the latter did not agree with the andro-centric culture prevalent at the time.[77]

There are certainly texts which show that Paul's interaction with women had been very positive. He regarded them as co-workers, respected them and valued the work they did, especially in proclaiming

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[73]Byrne, *Romans*, 454.

[74]Liddell & Scott, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 978.

[75]Winter, *Woman Word*, 230.

[76]Byrne, *Romans*, 454; N. T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* Vol. X (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 763.

[77]J.-C. Havyarimana, "Saint Paul, grand promoteur de la dignité de la femme," *Hekima Rev* 44 (2011): 77.

the Gospel to the Gentiles. Many women of different ethnicities and classes were engaged in a variety of work in the early Church, e.g., as missionaries, teachers, preachers, emissaries, deacons, and apostles. They all worked hard alongside men and Paul showed his deep indebtedness, gratitude, and respect for these women whom he called his co-workers.

When Paul writes, he attempts to further the cause of Jesus Christ and His Gospel whatever the situation demands. Thus, in the heat of a debate, Paul may use hyperbolic language to emphasize his point (Gal. 5:12). It also means that Paul often tries to be diplomatic in order to achieve his ends (1 Cor. 6:12–13; 9:19–23). Finally, the context of a controversy can lead Paul to stress certain points not because they are of great importance but because he must redress an imbalance in the thinking of his audience.[78]

His purpose in writing these letters was to

> strengthen the life of the Christian people, to help them with problems they faced as new Christians in a complex world on matters of faith and Christian life; to show what the Lord requires of us, which is love above everything else …. His main purpose in doing all this was to build up the church.[79]

Evaluation

Our exposition above has shown that the historical and socio-cultural contexts, norms, and conventions of the time had limited horizons and expectations of men and women, and these had influenced the text.

To acknowledge the context-conditioned character of Biblical teaching on relationships within marriage is not to deny authority

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[78]Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 25.

[79]S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Did I Betray the Gospel: The Letters of Paul and the Place of Women* (Geneva: WCC Publication, 1996), xiii.

to that teaching. Rather, it is to affirm the relevance of the teaching to the particular historical circumstances for which it was written. Contemporary social teaching that does not take into account the different circumstances of today is much less authoritative.

Paul's letters were written in response to questions asked by certain churches or his co-workers. We have to be mindful of the social and political locations of Paul's time. As we read these passages, we see how the early Church adapted to the prevailing customs, traditions, and social norms at that time while affirming the new teaching brought about by Christ as interpreted by Paul. With the changing attitude toward women today, these passages must not be used to justify subordination or oppression of women. More than anything else, we have to seek the mind of Christ as we try to interpret these texts.

The essence of the Gospel is the response in love to the challenges of historical, social, and human needs in situations whereby we celebrate the glorious freedom that is in Christ for all humanity. It is through the perspective of this gospel message that we should reread Pauline texts that are seemingly oppressive to women.

Present-day Christians need to bring to bear on contemporary conventional values with regard to the family and to social structures what they hold to be the heart of the Christian message and of their faith in Christ as Lord, e.g., bringing love and justice into marriage as well as respecting parents and honoring children's dignity.[80]

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[80]Lincoln, "Colossians," 660.

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Landas 28:2 (2014) 143–154

A PASTORAL QUESTION ON IVF AND EMBRYO ADOPTION

James McTavish, F.M.V.D.

> A faithful Catholic couple I know who have been married for nine years but are unable to have children asked me recently about embryonic adoption. I was a bit caught in the dark about that one, but I understand that it involves the legal adoption of an "unused" embryo (a product of *in vitro* fertilization or some such process) which is then implanted in a woman. Please can you tell me about the situation regarding IVF and update me on the opinion of the Catholic Church on adopting frozen embryos?[1]

The IVF (*in vitro* fertilization) industry continues to expand at an accelerated rate with over five million live IVF babies born since the process was introduced in 1978. Success rates vary between different clinics and hospitals and depend on various factors, most especially the age of the mother (younger women have a higher success rate). Overall, IVF is probably successful around 15–30% of the time. The procedure is expensive, however, with the average total cost ranging anywhere from $25,000 to $60,000, depending on the country in which the procedure is carried out.[2] The high profits at stake have led some IVF clinics toward rather unethical practices, thus

[1]Question posed by one Sr. R. in personal correspondence with the author.

[2]The Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Metro Manila quotes a price between PhP 200,000 and PhP 400,000 per cycle of IVF. See http://www.

leading researchers to comment that "the benefits of some technologies already established for routine use are currently dubious and there are clear ethical concerns with providing them to patients when their scientific basis is not clear."[3]

Part I of this essay gives an outline of the technique of IVF (including the recently introduced "3 parent IVF") along with a moral evaluation. Part II focuses on the morality of embryo adoption in an attempt to answer the pastoral question posed above.

I: The Technique of IVF and a Moral Evaluation

There are generally four major steps in the process of IVF:

1. Eggs are collected from the woman.
2. Sperm cells are obtained from the man.
3. The eggs and sperm cells are placed together in the laboratory via intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) to allow for fertilization and create embryos. This method has been used since the 1990s.
4. The embryos are transferred into the uterus of the woman.

Moral Issues Involved in IVF

a. Collecting eggs from the woman

The woman is given drugs to hyper-ovulate (produce many eggs). These drugs can cause side effects such as abdominal pain, nausea, etc.

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asianhospital.com/health-digest/pregnancy-ivf-revolution/ (accessed February 11, 2015).

[3]Rachel Brown & Joyce Harper, "The Clinical Benefit and Safety of Current and Future Assisted Reproductive Technology," *Reproductive Biomedicine Online* 25 (2012): 108–117.

b. Obtaining sperm from the man

Obtaining sperm by masturbation may be morally objectionable.[4] Moreover, donor sperm which is not from the husband may sometimes be used.

c. Placing the eggs and sperm cells together to allow for fertilization and create embryos

Embryos are created in the laboratory ("in the test tube"); human fertilization thus occurs apart from sexual intercourse and outside the human body.

In addition, many embryos are created in excess of what is required. The healthy ones are kept but defective embryos are destroyed. Healthy embryos can then be transferred to the woman or they can be frozen for use at a later date. Sometimes they are experimented on. In the United States alone, there are more than 500,000 frozen embryonic persons;[5] 50% of them will die upon being thawed.

d. Transferring embryos into the uterus of the woman

Two to four embryos are usually implanted in the mother's womb to increase the chances of pregnancy. Some of these implanted embryos will spontaneously abort, and so many embryos are lost for every child born. Moreover, multiple pregnancies are common and may affect the mother's health. If an IVF child makes it to birth, he or she is more likely to have a birth defect or handicap.[6]

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[4]Is masturbation to provide a medical sample a different act from masturbation for pleasure? Some moralists believe the two are not the same and that their moral evaluation is different.

[5]See abstract of P. Clark, "Embryo Donation/Adoption: Medical, Legal and Ethical Perspectives," *The Internet Journal of Law, Healthcare and Ethics* Vol. 5 No. 2 (2008). See https://ispub.com/IJLHE/5/2/11953 (accessed February 11, 2015).

[6]Michèle Hansen, et al., "Assisted Reproductive Technology and Birth Defects: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis," *Human Reproduction Update* 19:4 (July–Aug. 2013): 330–353. See http://humupd.oxfordjournals.org/content/19/4/330.full.pdf+html (accessed February 11, 2015).

Three Reasons Why the Church Says "No" to IVF

1. Massive destruction of human life.

Many embryos are created in the procedure. The healthy ones are kept but defective embryos are destroyed. The healthy embryos can then be transferred to the woman or they can be frozen for use at a later date.

What is done with the frozen embryos? Several of them are implanted in the mother's womb to increase the chances of pregnancy. Should too large a number of embryos start to grow, the "excess" embryos are usually aborted (called "pregnancy reduction"). At present, the number of embryos deliberately destroyed in this way hovers above 80% even in the most technically advanced centers of artificial fertilization.[7]

2. Separation of the procreative from the unitive dimension of the conjugal act.

In IVF, the fertilization occurs in a scientific laboratory outside the human body. This means that the unitive and procreative dimensions of the marriage act are separated.

The Church's teaching on marriage and human procreation affirms the inseparable connection, willed by God and not to be broken by man, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive and the procreative. "The reason is that the fundamental nature of the marriage act, while uniting husband and wife in the closest intimacy, also renders them capable of generating new life—and this as a result of laws written into the actual nature of man and of woman."[8] The Church also teaches that the child has the right "to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents."[9] By safeguarding both of these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the

[7] *Dignitas personae* (Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions) (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2008), footnote 27.

[8] *Humanae vitae* 12.

[9] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2378.

conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its ordination towards the couple's exalted vocation to parenthood.[10]

3. The child is treated as a product rather than as a gift.

A child

> cannot be desired or conceived as the product of an intervention of medical or biological techniques; that would be equivalent to reducing him to an object of scientific technology. No one may subject the coming of a child into the world to conditions of technical efficiency which are to be evaluated according to standards of control and dominion.[11]

"Three-Parent" IVF

There are new techniques being introduced in order to help combat inherited diseases of that part of the body called the mitochondria. The mitochondria are like the cell's battery as they produce energy. They also contain some DNA which if defective can lead to mitochondrial disorders which can cause major health problems like liver or heart disease. If the mother in the IVF process has defective mitochondria and does not want to pass on the defective DNA to her child, the mitochondrial DNA of a third person, the "third parent," can be used. This would mean the resulting child would have the genetic materials of 3 people—the majority of which are still from the mother and father but a small amount comes from a donor.

What can we say about the morality of such techniques? Let us seek an expert opinion from the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, a Roman Catholic academic institute in the UK that engages with the moral questions arising from clinical practice and biomedical research. Dr. Helen Watt, the Centre's Senior Research Fellow, made the following comment on the HFEA consultation:

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[10]See *Humanae vitae* 12.

[11]*Donum vitae* (Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation) (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987), Part II, B, 4c.

> Mitochondrial replacement has been called "3-parent IVF", but only one technique being considered would in fact produce 3-parent babies. The other technique involves a form of cloning from an early IVF embryo, using a second embryo as a shell, to produce a third, clone embryo who might then be transferred to the womb of the first embryo's mother to be born. The first and second embryo would be killed to create the third, clone embryo …. One technique would split genetic motherhood and give the child three genetic parents. The other technique would produce a child with no genetic parents: a child cloned instead from "spare parts" harvested from earlier living embryos …. Both techniques would affect not only individuals conceived and born but also their descendants. Both should be urgently opposed.[12]

Reacting in Front of an Existing IVF Child

In front of an existing IVF child or in relating to their parents once the child is already born, *Donum vitae* teaches: "although the manner in which human conception is achieved with IVF and ET [Embryo Transfer] cannot be approved, every child which comes into the world must in any case be accepted as a living gift of the divine Goodness and must be brought up with love."[13]

The Need for a Pastoral Approach to Infertility

Many infertile couples suffer tremendously—from their aching desire to have their own child to the challenge of having to accept their condition. Sometimes even the tests for infertility can be a little humiliating. It should be remembered thus that the child is a gift from God and that no one has a "right" to a child. The one who has the rights is the child to be born.

The reasons for infertility are not always known. This should not always be explained away as "the will of God." If the infertility is the result of previous sexual promiscuity with subsequent infection then it

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[12]See "Clones and Three-Parent Babies—Anscombe Centre Guidance," www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=21387 (accessed August 4, 2014).

[13]*Donum vitae* Part II, B. 5.

would be imprudent to label such as God's will. Neither should every couple who is infertile be counselled with insensitive advice such as: "Well, as a priest I cannot have children either." If a celibate has no children it is because of free choice, not infertility. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith gives this advice on how to deal with suffering caused by infertility in marriage:

> The community of believers is called to shed light upon and support the suffering of those who are unable to fulfill their legitimate aspiration to motherhood and fatherhood. Spouses who find themselves in this sad situation are called to find in it an opportunity for sharing in a particular way in the Lord's Cross, the source of spiritual fruitfulness …. Physical sterility in fact can be for spouses the occasion for other important services to the life of the human person, for example, adoption, various forms of educational work, and assistance to other families and to poor or handicapped children.[14]

As Church, we note the increasing number of cases of infertility. We caution against seeking recourse to IVF and commit ourselves to accompany couples to help carry this cross. Perhaps with medical intervention the couple may discover that the cause of infertility is treatable. In the whole process the couple should be encouraged to pray and not lose faith in their loving God:

> Early the next morning they worshiped before the LORD, and then returned to their home. When Elkanah had relations with his wife Hannah, the Lord remembered her. She conceived, and at the end of her term bore a son whom she called Samuel, since she had asked the Lord for him. (1 Sam. 1:19–20)

The Church Announces a "No" to IVF and a Big "Yes" to Life!

The Church must courageously oppose anything that threatens human life like IVF. In saying "no" to IVF, she is announcing a big "yes" to life. As she teaches in *Dignitas personae*, the Church's mission to protect the poor

[14]See *Donum vitae* Part II, B. 8.

> implies courageous opposition to all those practices which result in grave and unjust discrimination against unborn human beings, who have the dignity of a person, created like others in the image of God. Behind every "no" in the difficult task of discerning between good and evil, there shines a great "yes" to the recognition of the dignity and inalienable value of every single and unique human being called into existence.[15]

II: The Morality of Embryo Adoption

Creation of Excess Embryos

One by-product of the IVF process is the creation of excess or spare embryos. These additional embryos are commonly produced as backup in case the procedure fails, or if in the future the couple would like to try to have another child. At present, there are estimated to be one million frozen human embryos worldwide awaiting their fate.[16] Fr. Tad Pacholczyk, the Director of Education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, USA, stated that the "infertility industry has become an embryo mass-production line with virtually no legal oversight or national regulation. Catering to strong parental desires, it is a multibillion dollar business aptly described as the 'wild west of infertility.'"[17] So what do we do with the vast number of human embryos frozen in ice (liquid nitrogen actually) and in a state of "suspended animation"?

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[15]See *Dignitas personae* 37 (Conclusions).

[16]Some countries, such as Italy and Germany, have virtually no spare embryos as they strictly permit only 3 embryos to be produced for each cycle of infertility treatment and require all 3 to be implanted in the mother. See Fr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, "What Should We Do with the Frozen Embryos?," National Catholic Bioethics Center (Philadelphia, USA), www.ncbcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=478 (accessed February 11, 2015).

[17]Pacholczyk, "What Should We Do with the Frozen Embryos?"

No to the Production of "Spare" Embryos

The Catholic Church objects to the production of spare or supernumerary embryos and their subsequent cryopreservation which in itself is an offence against human dignity. Spare embryos are kept frozen until they are used for implantation in a uterus or for scientific research in a laboratory (where 50% would die in the process of thawing); otherwise, they would simply be disposed of.

Embryo Adoption

A solution suggested is to adopt these embryos and thereby "rescue" them. Some consider embryo adoption a quasi-heroic action whereas others consider it a form of cooperation with and perpetuation of the evils of the IVF trade. What are Catholic couples to decide on? The issue becomes more pressing as the number of frozen embryos rises.

When Britain announced that 3,300 embryos were to be discarded (having passed the limit of five years of storage), a group of 200 women banded together in Italy and requested to adopt prenatally these embryos.[18] Even some nuns asked the Vatican if they could offer their wombs to rescue these frozen little ones!

No Official Pronouncement

There has been no specific pronouncement from the Magisterium regarding the licitness of embryo adoption. As early as 1987, however, the Church had this to say in *Donum vitae*:

> In consequence of the fact that they have been produced *in vitro*, those embryos that are not transferred into the body of the mother and are called "spare" are exposed to an absurd fate, with no possibility of their being offered safe means of survival which can be licitly pursued.[19]

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[18]Francesco Demartis, "Mass Pre-Embryo Adoption," *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 7 (1998): 101–103.

[19]*Donum vitae* Part I, 5.

Later in 2008, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published an Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions with the Latin title *Dignitas personae*. In number 19 of this document, we find that it

> has also been proposed, solely in order to allow human beings to be born who are otherwise condemned to destruction, that there could be a form of "prenatal adoption." This proposal, praiseworthy with regard to the intention of respecting and defending human life, presents however various problems not dissimilar to those mentioned above.[20]

It is important to note that the Magisterium to date neither advocates nor categorically denounces the possibility of embryo adoption. Technically it remains an open question.[21]

Position of Theologians

Various well-respected moral theologians (e.g., C. Brugger, P. Cataldo, E. Furton, W. E. May, G. Grisez, J. Smith, among others) have put forward arguments in favor of embryo adoption, and yet others of similar caliber are against it (e.g., T. Pacholczyk).

Arguments for embryo adoption

Dr. Edward Furton, the current editor-in-chief at the National Catholic Bioethics Center, believes that the "least worst" solution is for the IVF parents to bring their existing embryos to birth; however, if this is not possible, then the embryos should be offered for adoption as this "is far preferable to allowing them to die. These embryos have as much of a right to life as any other human being."[22]

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[20] *Dignitas personae* 19.

[21] From a Magisterial and thus theological point of view, the question has not yet been settled, although some, such as Monsignor Ignacio Barreiro Carambula, interim president of Human Life International (HLI), have stated that they are against it (for Monsignor Carambula, the question of embryo adoption is already closed). See https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/the-question-of-embryo-adoption-is-closed-msgr-ignacio-barreiro/ (accessed February 11, 2015).

[22] Edward J. Furton, "On the Disposition of Frozen Embryos," *Ethics and Medics* 26:9 (Sept. 2001): 1–3.

Many consider embryo adoption a heroic act of rescue in favor of an endangered human being who, if not remaining frozen in ice or used in subsequent IVF, may eventually be destroyed through research or by being discarded. Moreover, the adoption of an embryo itself does not violate the conjugal act or separate union and procreation because the child already exists.[23]

Arguments against embryo adoption

Some ethicists hold that embryo adoption is illicit and the good end of saving an embryonic life cannot be justified by an illicit means. When implanted, a pregnancy arises which is not in consonance with God's design.[24] Many are also convinced that embryo adoption merely encourages the IVF industry to propagate and produce more embryos. A new market in making frozen embryos available for adoption could thus arise. By supporting embryo adoption the Church could give a bad example, causing confusion and even scandal among the faithful.

Conclusion

What is clear is that the creation and production of hundreds of thousands of excess embryos is a great injustice for which no easy solution exists, and in fact the situation "cannot be resolved" in a moral way.[25] For this reason, John Paul II appealed to the scientific world to halt the production of human embryos.[26]

The fate of one million or so *existing* frozen embryos lies hanging in the moral balance, with more and more moral theologians

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[23]Stephen Napier, "*Dignitas Personae* and the Question of 'Embryo Adoption': A Debate on *Dignitas Personae*, Part Two, nn 18–19," National Catholic Bioethics Center (Philadelphia, USA), www.ncbcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=1315 (accessed February 11, 2015).

[24]See Pacholczyk, "What Should We Do with the Frozen Embryos?"

[25]*Dignitas personae* 19.

[26]*Dignitas personae* 19.

supporting their adoption. While some groups such as "Snowflakes" actively promote embryo adoption,[27] Catholic couples should be aware that it is a delicate issue with strong arguments also proposed against this practice. The Magisterium has not yet made a definitive pronouncement, and so couples should do their best to be informed about the arguments on both sides of the debate. They can then make a prayerful and prudent choice, knowing that it is not a decision to be taken lightly, and that some risks may be involved.[28]

If a Catholic couple, following a serious discernment, decides to pursue embryo adoption, they should know that they are supported by some of the most respected and eminent moral theologians in the Church. They, such as Christian Brugger, feel that "making frozen embryos available for adoption would not only serve the urgent good of the embryos, but the interests of couples suffering from infertility."[29] In agreeing to adopt the embryo, the couple must in no way be supporting the evil of the IVF trade but rather sincerely striving to rectify the injustice of frozen human beings being held in "concentration cans."

[27]See www.embryoadoption.org.

[28]Although the author has not come across specific data for defects in children born through embryo adoption, it should be borne in mind that IVF-conceived babies frequently have a higher incidence of birth defects.

[29]Christian Brugger, "Domestic Adoption: An Approach to the Frozen Embryo Crisis," Culture of Life Foundation (USA: June 5, 2008). http://www.culture-of-life.org/domestic-adoption-approach-frozen-embryo-crisis-0 (accessed February 11, 2015).

Book Review

Landas 28:2 (2014) 157–161

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY AND DIVINE COMPASSION

By Antonio V. Romualdez

Quezon City: Claret Publications, 2014
xx + 208 pp., ISBN 978-971-9952-82-4
Reviewed by Cory O. Villafania

The 2014 Year of the Laity has seen the launching of Antonio V. Romualdez's book, *The Paschal Mystery and Divine Compassion*, which makes a significant contribution to theology and Christian spirituality. Romualdez's work is a project of the 2B/3C Foundation, a group organized by the former students (the author included) of Fr. Catalino G. Arevalo at the Ateneo de Manila High School during his teaching regency there from 1948 to 1951.

In his Preface to the book, the author explains: "What I have tried to reconstruct in these pages are the reflections expressed by Father Arevalo" (xii)[1] in the Holy Week Lecture Series of 1999. The "reconstruction" is meant to capture the lecturer's goals for the conferences: "first, to try to understand the Paschal Mystery in more deeply personal terms, and second, to look upon the mystery of the Redemption … in a way that will lead to some understanding and appreciation of the Father's role in it" (xiv).

Fr. Arevalo asked Romualdez in 2008 to publish his "reconstruction" since he had worked "hard and a lot" on the draft of 2001 which

[1]Inline citations refer to Antonio V. Romualdez, *The Paschal Mystery and Divine Compassion* (Quezon City: Claret Publications, 2014).

Fr. Arevalo himself corrected. The present book, therefore, is an integration of the reflections on the original Holy Week lectures along with "additional and more relevant scholarship on the lectures" which were deeply inspired by the mentor who taught the author with passion, faith, and conviction.

The contents of the book follow the sequence of the lectures given by Fr. Arevalo during the Holy Week of 1999.

Holy Wednesday—The introductory talk highlights the importance of "remembering" when participating in the Holy Week liturgy, very much like the *zikaron* (remembrance) of the Jewish Passover celebration. Remembering God's own loving message in Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection makes present what He did for us at Calvary and opens us to the future, to what God is going to bring into our lives.

Holy Thursday—The first lecture of the day answers the question "What is the role of the Father in the mystery of redemption—the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus?" (14) through a reflection on the Theology of Redemption[2] presented by the International Theological Commission under Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and Fr. Avery Dulles' lecture on "The Death of Jesus as Sacrifice."[3] It clarifies the concept of atonement central to the Hebrew Scriptures as "the process whereby the positive creature-Creator relationship, after having been weakened, disturbed, or violated (by the creature), is restored by the Creator to its proper harmony."[4]

This is placed in contrast to the misconception that atonement is a "penitential action by which we can earn or make ourselves worthy

[2]Commisio Theologica Internationalis, "Quaestionis Selectae de Deo Redemptore," *Gregorianum* 78/3 (1997): 421–476; the Italian version was also published in *Civilta Cattolica* 146 (December 1995): 551–599.

[3]This was originally delivered as the Cardinal Pio Laghi Lecture at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, on March 21, 1996.

[4]Robert J. Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (London / New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 35.

of God's forgiveness" (19). St. Anselm's "Satisfaction Theology," which says that only the sacrifice of God's own Son, equal to him in divinity and dignity, can make satisfaction for the wrong done to him by mankind, presents a "monstrous God" according to contemporary theologians. Rather, redemption is "the act of God forgiving on his own initiative as one who, by his being Love itself, washes away our sins" (29). The Cross is "that foolish love of God that gives itself away to the point of humiliation in order thus to save man" (43).

The second lecture is a reflection on the three major liturgical events of Holy Thursday: the Mass of the Chrism, the Washing of the Feet, and the Gift of the Eucharist, the common motif of which is communion, community, and service. The Mass of the Chrism presents the priest as the "minister of unity, that unity rooted in his oneness with his bishop, which itself is finally rooted in the Eucharist" (46). The Washing of the Feet also signifies oneness between Jesus and His disciples, a sacrament of how they love one another in humble service. Lastly, the gift of the Eucharist is presented as the "root and center" of "ecclesial communion" which, according to Pope John Paul II, lies "at the heart of the Church's self-understanding."[5] The Eucharist makes them "Church."[6] The most important thing about Holy Thursday and the Eucharist is "being given, and broken, and poured out for others" (62–63).

Good Friday—The lecture presents the self-emptying (*kenosis*) of Jesus "as a setting aside of those consequences of being God which would prevent him from being 'one like us in all things except sin'" (72). "Theologians today like to stress that God shows his power by abdicating power …. The only power he finally uses is the power of love" (76).

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[5]John Paul II, *Address to the Bishops of the United States of America*, 16-IX-1987, n. 1: "Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II" X, 3 (1987), 553.

[6]At the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa (Italy), on the afternoon of September 15, 2001, Cardinal Ratzinger said: "the Eucharist binds all men together, and not just with one another, but with Christ; in this way it makes them 'Church'" (http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDFECCV2.HTM).

Father and Son are so intimately united with each other that they have only one will. When Jesus looks at the Father, he sees only the Kingdom where all people are brothers and sisters. His teachings, his actions, and his whole life reflect this. "The Kingdom of God—the unfinished business of the Kingdom—is the placing of the poor, and the broken, and the marginalized at the center of our societies, so that we begin on earth the reality of the Kingdom" (86).

Compassion (σπλάγχνα) is what the Father and the Son have in common. The denominative verb σπλαγχνίζομαι means "to be moved from the 'guts' …. In the synoptic gospels … [it] is 'reserved' to God Father and to Jesus" (87). Such compassion was the reason for the Incarnation, for Jesus entering into all the dark and broken spaces of our lives, filling them with his love, taking them upon himself, and healing them to bring forth new life. Compassion was also the reason why he was killed. What Jesus taught was "not primarily about acts of worship or cult but about living as brothers and sisters in peace and love and sharing what we have with those who have not. He had to be killed because his preaching was too dangerous" (108). The Cross, therefore, is the full revelation of the love of God that will not be killed by death; it is His glory, the triumph of His mercy and compassion.

Holy Saturday—The lecture presents a theological reflection on the Resurrection and stresses that only in faith can we truly accept Jesus' rising from the dead.

> In the resurrection, everything that he [Jesus] had put aside at the incarnation because he loved us, because he wanted to share our lives, flowed back into him, and this is the Jesus who lives today, the Jesus in whom the fullness of the divinity dwells, whence everything of the divinity flows into us. (120)

The Risen Jesus who lives in all of us makes possible the *communio sanctorum* or the "communion of holy goods," enabling us to share one another's burdens, bear one another's sorrows, pray for one another, and making us more and more the Body of Christ, the Church. There is no scientific proof for the Resurrection; there is only a Mother Teresa of Calcutta, an Archbishop Oscar Romero, a Richie Fernando,

and so many more who have given their lives to the poor for love of Christ—all shining testimonies that Christ is alive!

Mr. Romualdez's book challenges us in this Year of the Poor and the Year of Consecrated Life to ask ourselves: Are we willing, like Christ, to abdicate power as the world sees it, in order to place the marginalized at the center of our societies, and there serve them as brothers and sisters? Can we be vulnerable with them so that we can love them from the standpoint of weakness, through which God's compassion flows to them and makes them whole?

This great work believes so; it is a book of faith.

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