EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN FINLAND

SINAPPI, ST. PETERSBURG AND SIIKANIEMI

The 13th, 14th and 15th theological discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church

Church Council, Helsinki 2013
Documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland – 13

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FOREWORD

The ecumenical conversations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), which were initiated by Archbishop Martti Simojoki and Metropolitan Nikodim, have been ongoing since 1970. The first concrete initiative was made in 1967 by Archbishop Simojoki, who suggested the idea of bilateral theological discussions to Patriarch Alexey. The wider ecumenical background was the discussions taking place between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Evangelical Church. They had begun already in 1959 in the aftermath of the Second World War - when East-West relations began to become more tense and constructive contacts and reconciliation were especially needed.[1] The general ecumenical climate was also influenced in the 1960s by the ecumenical revival brought about by the Second Vatican Council and the numerous bilateral theological dialogues initiated/undertaken by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity in the late sixties.

The dialogue between ELCF and ROC has proved to be fruitful in many ways. Its theological nature, underlined already by Archbishop Simojoki, led in the conversations of Kiev 1977 to the development of the paradigmatic idea of "Christ present in faith" (*In ipsa fide Christus adest*) in ecumenical Luther research on the initiative of Professor Tuomo Mannermaa and his students. The viewpoint convincingly demonstrated the parallels between Luther's idea of justification as *favor* and *donum* and the Orthodox understanding of deification (*theosis*). It has been a useful tool in the discussions both for dogmatic and social ethical reflections and for the understanding of the Church and Christian life in today's world.

This discovery, which underscores the realistic and communal character of Martin Luther's thinking as well as the union of faith and love in the believer through Christ's presence in faith, has facilitated ecumenical convergence and consensus beyond the scope of this dialogue. The best known examples are the influence of this line of Luther interpretation on the *Porvoo Common Statement* (1992) and the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999). Also in the dialogue with the Methodists and Pentecostals the idea of the presence of Christ in the context of pneumatological and Trinitarian thought continues to be useful.

Participation in the inner life of the Trinity, which lies at the heart of this interpretation of Luther, and the biblical and early Church roots of his theological

1 For "The EKD-Russian Dialogue", see e.g. Saarinen 1997, 84-127.

thoughts, connects the ecumenical interpretation of Luther with many of today's ecumenical discussions regarding ecclesiology. It can be connected with the concept of "koinonia" as the biblical and theological framework for ecumenical ecclesiology. Ever since the Faith and Order conference in Santiago de Compostela in 1993, participation in the inner life of the Triune God as source of the life of the Church has provided important common ecumenical ground. For instance, in the new Faith and Order convergence text, *The Church. Towards a Common Vision* (2013), it is stated: "The Church is fundamentally a communion in the Triune God and, at the same time, a communion whose members partake together in the life and mission of God (cf. 2 Pet. 1:4), who, as Trinity, is the source and focus of all communion."

In the evaluation of the ELCF-ROC dialogue in 2002, one of the mutually shared perceptions was formulated in the communiqué: "By getting to know the other's spiritual culture we have been able to strengthen our understanding of our own tradition". While religious freedom had on the one hand increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new freedom to act had also complicated the relationships between Christians. Mutual discussions and a building of trust was therefore needed.[2]

The urgent need for joint work between the Churches is also underlined: "Secularization and spiritual nihilism continue to pose a serious challenge to Christians." This calls the Churches to solve common problems together. These dialogues are seen as beneficial for this kind of cooperation and mutual understanding. In other words, there is great motivation for staying together as Churches and Christians despite our differing circumstances. The conclusion is this: "Mutual discussions of profound theological questions, resistance to the politics of brute force, interaction and the understanding of each other's thoughts and ways – everything that we have been doing for over 30 years – will stand us in good stead for our journey into the future."

2 For the evaluation of the dialogue, see the publication "Lappeenranta 1998 & Moscow. The Eleventh and Twelfth Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church." (Documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 11. Church Council, Helsinki 2011). See also the study by Risto Saarinen: Faith and Holiness. Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue 1959-1994 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1997) and the article by Juhani Forsberg in Reseptio 1/2009, the issue devoted to the Dialogues between Orthodox and other CEC Member Churches, p. 179-187. Heta Hurskainen analyses the social ethical themes in the dialogue in her forthcoming doctoral thesis "Socio-Ethical Discussion in the Ecumenical Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 1970-2008", forthcoming in the series of the Luther-Agricola Society's "Schriften" in 2013.

The dialogue between the Churches and the secular world and our common Christian witness in that context is underlined in the following evaluation: "The new century will not be an easy or cloudless time. If we are to be fully equipped to face its challenges we will have to be firmly anchored in our own traditions and able to open them up to the people of today, to undertake penetrating analyses of the problems of modern society and to bear witness to our own faith and values before those in power and before all people."

In the light of this analysis the main themes for future dialogue were sketched. Firstly, important themes of doctrine were identified: "Above all, we should make a joint study of the field of Christian anthropology, including the Orthodox and Lutheran views of human free will and its relation to the *oikonomia* of salvation."

Regarding the social ethical side of the discussions, a longer formulation is given in the communiqué: "The conversations should also deal extensively with social ethics and its impact on our lives and beliefs. People's beliefs cannot fail to affect their deeds and thereby influence society at large. In this connection we should consider how a Christian awareness should be reflected in the social work carried out by our churches. Particular attention should be paid to the nature of the world views and moral values that direct events on the integrated continent of Europe. We should continue our theological work on the question of peace in a modern, dynamically changing context in a manner that is free of all political interests, as in the earlier days of our conversations. At the same time, questions of bioethics and the family and of the relation between human rights and responsibilities should be high on the agenda."

These formulations meant that the new context of the Churches in the modern world and in Europe, and in the relations between Europe and Russia, was mutually explicated and would have an impact on the themes of the next discussions. Solid biblical and doctrinal reflections have proved themselves fruitful for encounters in issues that otherwise could have devolved into a superficial, instrumental, or one-sided treatment.

Accordingly, in 2005 in Sinappi, Turku, the theme of the thirteenth theological discussions was "The Christian View on Human Being in Today's Europe. Salvation, Faith and Modern Social Realities." The choice of the theme directly reflects the conclusions of the evaluation, which took place in Moscow. Its relevance is motivated in the following way: "The question of anthropology, the understanding of what it is to be human, is at the focal point when values and ethics are discussed in present-day Europe. A strong emphasis on individuality easily guides societies to make decisions that are alien to Christian views. Especially the

question of free will links discussions concerning human nature to the field of faith and salvation."

Thus theological anthropology is seen to be a key issue, especially in the post-socialist and globalized context of secular – or postsecular – societies where Churches live and act in present-day Europe. Ethical questions seem to be dominating. This ties in with the fact that, for instance, Pope John Paul II dealt with anthropology in numerous writings. In addition, in the recent Anglican-Orthodox or Anglican-Catholic dialogue, the questions of anthropology are also predominant. This discussion, which is taking place not only at ecumenical or international, but also very much at inner-church levels, continues intensively world-wide. In the aforementioned Faith and Order document, the Church issues a challenge along these lines: "If present and future ecumenical dialogue is to serve both the mission and the unity of the Church, it is important that this dialogue explicitly addresses challenges to convergence represented by contemporary moral issues."

Over the course of the discussions at Sinappi, two groups of theses were formulated: "Christian understanding of being a human" and "Foundations of social ethics and a critical look at European values". As previously, one theme was more doctrinally oriented while the second took a social ethical perspective. However, it was made clear that the standpoint of the Churches on social ethical matters is not purely secular: "II.1. Our common foundation in social ethics is faith in the Triune God."

In the fourteenth discussions held in St. Petersburg in 2008, the same train of thought was extended along the lines of the evaluation in Moscow 2002. The theme was now "Freedom as Gift and Responsibility. Human Rights and Religious Education from the Christian Perspective". The differing contexts had, and continue to have, an influence on the way these topics are dealt with in the respective Churches. Yet, after the discussions, obvious convergence could be found was expressed in the communiqué: "The delegations of the theological discussions noted at the beginning of the discussion that the context of Russian Orthodox Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the circumstances and historic backgrounds of Finnish and Russian societies and the position of the churches and their possibilities to influence in their countries are different. However, we can note that the churches' theological views on human dignity and human rights and right to religious education are close to each other." These

discussions were the first ones to follow the publication of The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights in June 2008.[3]

In Siikaniemi, Hollola, in 2011, the theme of the fifteenth discussions was "The Church as Community. Christian Identity and Church Membership". This time there was no specific social ethical theme. Yet the meeting continued to reflect on the challenges of the current circumstances and how the Churches should respond and be in dialogue with modern-day societies. Anthropology was now dealt with from the perspective of ecclesiology. On the basis of biblical and systematic theological reflections, it was possible to theologically analyse the tension between doctrinal Christian self-understanding and the sociological realities of the Churches in the world today.

The source of the life of the Church was again expressed in terms of participation in the inner life of the Triune God:

"2) The Holy Trinity is the first image of the Church's existence and life. In Church the person partakes of eternal life through the grace of the Holy Spirit through God's word and holy sacraments, and he comes into the community of love which is a picture of the love that exists between the persons of the Holy Trinity."

The theological understanding of the Trinitarian *koinonia* as basis for Christian life was also applied in the more practically oriented group of theses:

"1) The Christian faith is a fundamental element in European culture and society. Christianity has shaped our understanding of the deepest nature of human personality. This understanding emphasizes the infinite value of human life as well as a person's freedom and responsibility. According to the Christian viewpoint, personality develops best in a society that cherishes the person's uniqueness but which also shields it from selfish individualism. Christian society reflects the life of the Holy Trinity and sets the person into a connection, *koinonia*, with God and other people. Taking part in society's life also modifies the person's real Christian identity, the strengthening of which is one of the Church's most important pastoral duties in this age."

The theological understanding of anthropology and the resulting social ethical questions, as well as the tasks facing the Churches and societies still seem to be a

3 For the discussion with other European Churches, see the human rights page on the website of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/human-rights/).

theme which needs further elaboration in future discussions. On the way forward, as over the last 40 years, it continues to be vital to discuss both traditional and new contextual questions in an atmosphere of prayer, anchored in a shared biblical and Christian tradition. As was stated in Moscow: "Mutual discussions of profound theological questions, resistance to the politics of brute force, interaction and the understanding of each other's thoughts and ways everything that we have been doing for over 30 years … will stand us in good stead for our journey into the future."

Helsinki, 23rd May 2013

Tomi Karttunen

SINAPPI 2005

COMMUNIQUÉ

on the Thirteenth Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, which were entitled "The Christian View on Human Being in Today's Europe. Salvation, Faith and Modern Social Realities." [4]

The thirteenth theological discussions between the delegations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church were held from the 20th to the 25th of September, 2005, in Turku, Finland, in parish union facilities known as Sinappi ("Mustard").

The first theological discussions between these two Churches were held in 1970 in Sinappi, Turku (Finland), the second in 1971 in Zagorsk (Russia/USSR), the third in 1974 in Järvenpää (Finland), the fourth in 1977 in Kiev (Ukraine/USSR), the fifth in 1980 in Turku, the sixth in 1983 in Leningrad (Russia/USSR), the seventh in 1986 in Mikkeli (Finland), the eighth in 1989 in Pyhtitsa (Piukhtitsa, Estonia/USSR) and Leningrad, the ninth in 1992 in Järvenpää, the tenth in 1995 in Kiev (Ukraine), the eleventh in 1998 in Lappeenranta (Finland), and the twelfth in 2002 in Moscow (Russia).

* * *

The members of the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) were as follows: The Most Rev. Jukka **PAARMA**, Archbishop of Turku and Finland (head of the delegation); the Right Rev. Dr. Voitto **HUOTARI**, Bishop of Mikkeli; the Right Rev. Dr. Juha **PIHKALA**, Bishop of Tampere; the Rev. Dr. Hans-Olof **KVIST**, professor (emeritus) in the Faculty of Theology in Åbo Academy (Swedish-language university in Turku); the Rev. Dr. Antti **LAATO**, also professor in the Faculty of Theology in Åbo Academy; the Rev. Dr. Antti **RAUNIO**, professor in the Faculty of Theology in the University of Helsinki; the Rev. Irja **ASKOLA**, Diocesan Secretary in the Espoo Diocese; B.A. Ms. Sylvia **RAULO**, program officer of Finnchurchaid; and, as an advisor, the Rev. Dr. Matti **KOTIRANTA**, professor in the Faculty of Theology in the University of Joensuu.

4 This communiqué and the appended theses have been translated into English from Finnish by Rev. Jouni Salko. (Besides Finnish, official documents were also made in Russian.) The title (overall theme) of the discussions, however, had been agreed upon in English before the discussions were held, so it has not been translated.

The delegates of the Russian Orthodox Church were: His Eminence Metropolitan **VLADIMIR** of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, permanent member of the Holy Synod (head of the delegation); His Eminence Bishop **HILARION** (Alfeyev) of Vienna and Austria; Archimandrite **YANNUARY** (Ivliyev), professor in the St. Petersburg Theological Academy; Father Igor **VYSHANOV**, Secretary of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Father Vladimir **SMALIJ**, Vice Principal of the Moscow Theological Academy; Father Andrei **LORGUS**, Dean of the Faculty of Psychology in the Russian Orthodox Institute named after St. John the Theologian; and Ms. Elena S. **SPERANSKAYA** from the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, also a teacher at the Moscow Theological Academy. [5]

The observers invited by the ELCF included Bishop Aarre **KUUKAUPPI** and Dean, General Secretary Alexander **PRILUTSKY** from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia; Professor Alar **LAATS** from the Tallinn Theological Institute, representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia; the Rev. Tuomo **VALJUS** representing the Church of Sweden; the Very Rev. Archpriest Veikko **PURMONEN** representing the Finnish Orthodox Church; General Secretary Jan **EDSTRÖM** from the Finnish Ecumenical Council; Father Teemu **SIPPO** SCJ from the (Roman) Catholic Church in Finland; and Mr. Väinö **HYVÖNEN** from the Council of Free Christians in Finland.

Ex officio members of the ELCF delegation were the Rev. Dr. Risto **Cantell**, director of the Church Department for International Relations; the Rev. Dr. Kimmo **Kääriäinen**, director of the Church Research Institute; the Rev. Heikki **Jääskeläinen**, Secretary to the Archbishop; the Rev. Dr. Matti **Repo**, Executive Secretary for Theology in the Church Department for International Relations; Dr. Kaisamari **Hintikka**, Associate Secretary for Theology in the same department; and Rev. Timo **Rosqvist**, Assistant Secretary to the Archbishop.

Also present at the discussions were two persons from the Russian Orthodox Church, namely Father Archpriest Viktor **Lytik**, representative of the Moscow Patriarchate in Finland, and Hieromonk **Ignaty** (Tarasov), a scholarship student in the Faculty of Theology in the University of Helsinki.

Erja *Katainen*, Marina *Latschinoff* and Tarja *Leppäaho* served as interpreters during the discussions. Secretaries included Ms. Minna *Väliaho*, administrative

5 Finnish transliterations of Russian names have been available to the translator, who has modified the transliteration to suit those who read English. The transliteration is somewhat crude; e.g. no distinction is made between ий and ы.

assistant in the Church Department for International Relations, and the Rev. Heta *Hurskainen* and theology student Mr. Tapani *Saarinen*.

* * *

The thirteenth theological discussions were opened on Tuesday, September 20th, by Archbishop Paarma, who recalled the beginnings of these meetings between the ELCF and the Russian Orthodox Church:

"We are starting these thirteenth theological discussions between our Churches in a memorable and historical place. The first discussions of this kind were held here in Sinappi in Turku thirty-five years ago during the Holy Week and the time of Easter. The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church was led by Bishop Philaret, who is now Metropolitan bishop of Minsk and Belarus. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran delegation was led by Martti Simojoki, Archbishop of Turku and Finland."

"Our series of theological discussions began then in 1970, but they had been initiated earlier. When Archbishop Simojoki visited Patriarch Alexis I in Moscow in 1967, he proposed that our churches would enter into dialogue 'on the mysteries of our holy faith.' His idea was that encounters between our Churches should not only be polite diplomacy and exchange of visits. We should proceed into something more important: to explore the Christian faith together. His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia immediately assented to this proposal."

"We have agreed that the overall theme for our discussions that begin today is 'The Christian View on Human Being in Today's Europe. Salvation, Faith and Modern Social Realities.' We can see now that this topic has been a wise choice. The question of anthropology, the understanding of what it is to be human, is at the focal point when values and ethics are discussed in present-day Europe. A strong emphasis on individuality easily guides societies to make decisions that are alien to Christian views. Especially the question of free will links discussions concerning human nature to the field of faith and salvation."

"Theological discussions were started in the era of Patriarch Alexis I and with his blessing. Now we return to our conference table here in Sinappi with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II."

Metropolitan Vladimir read a letter of greeting sent to the meeting by Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and all Russia, in which His Holiness stated:

"For more than thirty years theologians of our Churches have engaged in serious scholarly discussions on doctrinal questions, aiming to reach greater mutual understanding between these two Churches. We greatly appreciate the fact that theologians in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland know and deeply understand Orthodox doctrine and tradition, and we support Russian Orthodox theologians in their endeavors to convey our understanding of divine truth to Christians of other confessions.

The topic of the present discussions, 'The Christian View on Human Being in Today's Europe. Salvation, Faith and Modern Social Realities,' is direct continuation of our earlier discussions. This bears witness to our common concern over the moral condition of present-day society. It is lamentable that many people have ceased to think about the purpose of their life. To them, the means of upholding physical existence have become an end in itself, although it is obvious that such an inclination means spiritual suicide. All these contemporary questions and problems demand believers in Christ to give well-founded and convincing answers, and we are expecting theologians in our Churches to provide them.

The Russian Orthodox Church has always built its relationship with ELCF on evangelical brotherhood and the love of Christ. It is my hope, then, that good relations between our Churches and peoples would further develop and deepen. I wish God's help in the task ahead to all who arrange and take part in discussions."

Metropolitan Vladimir went on to recall the estimation made by Patriarch Alexis of Moscow and all Russia, at the time Metropolitan bishop of Leningrad and Novgorod, in 1989 in Pyhtitsa: "These are among the most fruitful bilateral theological talks that the Russian Orthodox Church is participating in." [6]

Metropolitan Vladimir continued, "And this is truly the case. During the past decades the Russian Orthodox Church has been a party in many bilateral dialogues, but only the dialogues with Evangelical Lutheran Churches have proven their vitality."

"The theme of our meeting, 'The Christian View on Human Being in Today's Europe,' is very timely. Together with you we are aware how arduously the ratification of the EU constitution is making progress and how in the constitution

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6 The English translation of this quotation has been taken from the publication *Creation. The Eighth Theological Conversations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church. Pyhtitsa and Leningrad, June 9th-19th 1989. Documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 3*, page 16. (Helsinki 1991, Church Council for Foreign Affairs, Ecclesiastical Board)

certain circles in the West want to play down the role and significance of Christianity in the history of Europe. We must be on the watch for this. This means that more vigorous Christian upbringing is needed in today's Europe."

"As believers and followers of Christ we must use the most active means in witnessing to the present-day world about unchanging values that are laid in the foundations of Christianity. Art, architecture, music, literature and much more that surrounds us in this world is filled with Christian meaning and content."

The observers at the discussions presented their greetings during the meeting.

* * *

Throughout the discussions members of the delegations took turns in leading morning and evening prayer services following their traditions, either Lutheran or Orthodox.

Metropolitan Vladimir officiated an Orthodox vigil in the Church of the consulate general of the Russian Federation in Turku on Saturday, 24th of September.

The delegations were present on Sunday, 25th of September in the Turku cathedral in a Lutheran communion service led by Archbishop Jukka Paarma. Bishop Juha Pihkala preached, and Metropolitan Vladimir brought greetings from the Russian Orthodox Church.

* * *

On Friday, 23rd of September, the city of Turku gave a reception hosted by mayor *Armas Lahoniitty*. After the reception the participants visited St. Henry's ecumenical art chapel in Hirvensalo.

On Saturday, 24th of September, Consul General *Vadim V. Rozanov* hosted dinner for the delegations at the consulate general.

When these discussions were over, the Lutheran parishes of Turku and Kaarina provided lunch for the delegations on Sunday the 25th of September. *Rauno Heikola*, dean of the cathedral, and *Pentti Heikola*, chairman of the parish union board, acted as hosts.

* * *

The following presentations related to the overall theme "The Christian View on Human Being in Today's Europe. Salvation, Faith and Modern Social Realities" were made during these theological discussions:

On the topic "Biblical perspectives on humanity"

Professor Antti Laato: "The fallen human according to the Bible – exegetical viewpoints"

Professor, Archimandrite Yannuary: "The human being in the Bible – an exegetical viewpoint"

On the topic "Christian understanding of being a human"

Professor Hans-Olof Kvist: "The possibilities that a justified sinner has in believing in the holy Triune God and with regard to moral activity"

Dean Andrei Lorgus: "A human being – an image of God or a slave of desires? Dialogue between Christian and secular psychology"

On the topic "Foundations of social ethics"

Professor Antti Raunio: "The foundations and application of Lutheran social ethics"

Rev. Vladimir Shmaly: "Social ethics in the context of theology and the philosophy of religion"

On the topic "European values"

Director Kimmo Kääriäinen: "European values"

Bishop Hilarion: "Europe at the crossroads. Spiritual and ethical viewpoints on the confrontation of Christianity and secularism"

The results of these discussions are expressed in the summary that is appended to this communiqué.

* * *

The documents of the discussions were solemnly signed on Sunday, September 25th, in the Turku cathedral, on which occasion Metropolitan Vladimir and Archbishop Jukka Paarma both gave a speech.

* * *

The thirteenth theological discussions between representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church were held in a spirit of cordial Christian openness and mutual respect.

* * *

Upon completing their work the delegations at the discussions in Sinappi thanked God and expressed their unanimous view that the Churches have learned to know each other better and that the discussions have been fruitful. Therefore, theological discussions should continue.

In Turku on the twenty-fifth of September, 2005

Jukka Paarma
Archbishop of Turku
and Finland

Vladimir
Metropolitan bishop of St. Petersburg
and Ladoga

The Thirteenth Theological Discussions between
the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
and the Russian Orthodox Church,
APPENDIX to the communiqué

SUMMARY

The Christian View on Human Being in Today's Europe
Salvation, Faith and Modern Social Realities

Christian understanding of being a human

The overall theme of these theological discussions puts theological anthropology together with present challenges to the Christian faith. Earlier, representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church have discussed their understanding of what it is to be human in the context of salvation. The subject has been approached from a soteriological viewpoint in 1977 in Kiev *(Salvation as justification and deification)*, in 1980 in Turku *(Faith and love as elements of salvation)* and in 1986 in Mikkeli *(Holiness, sanctification and the saints)*. Based on these thirteenth theological discussions and referring to theses prepared in earlier meetings the delegations give together the following statements:

I.1. God created humankind in his image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27). Originally, humans[7] were not inclined to sin; instead, their free will followed God's will and was aligned with it. God put people in a world that was good and beautiful.

I.2. Humans were called to live in fellowship with God and to live according to his will. Having been endowed with free will, humans were nevertheless unable to follow this call in their own strength without God. God called people to eternal life that is possible only in fellowship with him.

I.3. Humans were created to live in fellowship with each other. They were intended to be a part of the order of love in which all creatures serve each other. The commandment of love given by God reflects the intention he has as Creator, that the purpose of the existence of humankind is to remind of the essence of the triune God.

7 In this as well as most of the other theses, the Finnish text speaks of humans in the singular (*ihminen*).

I.4. In the fall to sin humans refused to obey God. Love toward others was replaced by self-love. Consequently love toward the Creator of the world was narrowed down into love toward the created world, apart from God. In the Fall people were spiritually separated from God. A human became bent inward upon oneself, no longer seeing the world as God's gift but as something to exploit selfishly.

I.5. Human will was distorted in the Fall. People came to know good and evil (Gen. 3), but it also became difficult to achieve good and prevent evil. A human's selfish will resists what the mind knows to be good. In its original state before the Fall, human will naturally sought what is good, but in the fallen state the will is distorted. "The LORD said, '…the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth…'" (Gen. 8:21). [8]

I.6. Sin brought illness and death into the world. "Sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Sin and its consequences are passed on from each generation to the next.

I.7. God originally intended to have humankind live in unity and mutual love. People were separated from each other by sin, and they started to think that turning inward upon oneself is better than fellowship in love. Individuals started to seek their own personal good in society.

I.8. As a consequence of the Fall, human activity can lead to evil even when there is desire to do good. Only God's grace can resolve this tension and contradiction. The Bible tells about the covenant made by God and proclaims the promises God has given. Although people have not been obedient in this covenant, God holds to his promises and is gracious toward people.

I.9. According to the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the new Adam in whom God's purpose for humankind is fulfilled. The breaking of God's will was the sin of Adam, whereas Jesus came into the world to do God's will (Heb. 10:7-10). Jesus proclaimed a kingdom that could only be entered by those who do the will of God (Matt. 7:21). Christ fulfilled God's will and overcame the power of sin. Christ, then, gives life; because of his death and resurrection every human can overcome the power of sin and be saved from death. Christ redeemed humankind from the spiritual imprisonment caused by the Fall. A human who turns to Christ in faith is freed from the power of evil by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and this individual's will is made whole and compliant to God's will.

8 Scripture is quoted according to the New Revised Standard Version.

I.10. God's grace in Christ releases a human from slavery to the law and from bondage to sin. The Holy Spirit awakens the liberated human to want as well as to do what is good (John 8:32, Rom. 6:18, Rom. 8:2, Gal. 5:1). This freedom given by God as a gift includes as a first fruit an experience of the wholeness into which humankind has been created but which is only fully realized in eternity (Rom. 8:23). Gospel accounts of healing foreshow final and holistic salvation.

I.11. As a consequence of sin the human will lost its wholeness. "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. …I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Rom. 7:15,19). Nevertheless a human is not a doll or a robot remote-controlled by external powers. One is forced to make choices between good and evil in every moment of life.

I.12. A human partakes of salvation in the Church of Christ. The Savior himself established the Church. According to the teaching of the apostles, the Church is the body of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Within the Church a human who believes in the triune God and in Christ the Savior receives help that strengthens the will to follow the God-given commandment to love. As a follower of Christ, the Church as a community must help individuals in various ways to live in accordance to God's will.

I.13. In its creed the Church praises the triune God for his plan to save humans. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit work together for our salvation so that a sinner turns toward God in the way that God has intended. "It is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) When God in his grace gives faith and love as a gift to a human, he also aligns the human will to receive what the gospel offers. Salvation is God's gift that begins in this life and is fulfilled in eternity.

I.14. In practicing faith among people a Christian works actively together with God. A Christian strives to do good to others because that is God's will, and also accepts from others what is needed to fulfill the Creator's good purposes. God's greatness and a Christian's humility before him are accentuated in this co-operation.

Foundations of social ethics and a critical look at European values

II.1. Our common foundation in social ethics is faith in the triune God. The Holy Trinity is a perfect communion of the persons in self-giving communication of their being. The substance of this unity is love. God's love toward the world is manifested in creation, and it culminates in Christ. God is goodness and the source and giver of all good. Because God is at work in all of creation, we understand that social ethics have to do with all the reality of the created world.

II.2. Humankind has been created to live in communion, but falling into sin has broken this fellowship. [9] As a result of the Fall, powers opposing the realization of love are in this world. Today they are manifested as selfishness and self-centeredness that have arisen from unbelief. The Church sets up the commandment of love against them.

II.3. Sin has broken the human being, but this brokenness has been healed in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The Son of God came into the world to be human and to suffer and die for the sake of the salvation of humans (Phil. 2:6-8). A Christian, partaking of Christ and his divine love, is awakened to love fellow humans. A fallen sinner is transformed into a person who exists not only for one's own sake, but who lives for others. The fullness of being a human is made true in union with Christ, and the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:36-40) to love God and love one's neighbor as oneself tells us what this fullness means. God's love, by its nature spreading gifts, leads people to care for those who are weak and suffering, to promote justice, well-being, peace and security in the world.

II.4. The Church is the body of Christ, its members united in love with each other and with Christ by the Holy Spirit. God upholds and renews life with his word and his sacraments in the Church. The Church, like Christ, is called to love and to give itself for the life of the world through witness, service, and caring for the world created by God.

II.5. The demand to love is unconditional and applies to all. It must be understood in the light of God's word and as expressed in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Society must also strive to distribute good so that all of

9 "Communion" and "fellowship" (both usually corresponding to the Greek κοινωνία) are the same word, *yhteys*, in the Finnish text. This translation into English alternates between these synonyms according to context.

its members get their fair share. The task of the Church in this time and age is to remind people about living according to God's will and by its teaching guide people to put the commandment of love in practice and to make right choices.

II.6. In today's Europe Churches are continually faced with challenges posed by secularism and privatization of religious life as well as alienation from Christian values and teachings of the Church. Despite this, religious and spiritual longing and the need for moral principles have not decreased. This challenges Churches to strengthen their mission in this world and to hold on to their right to engage in dialogue with society.

II.7. Many basic European values such as every person's value and dignity or being responsible for others have their roots in Christianity. Churches have had a key role in building up European identity. Europeans must recognize the Christian roots of their own culture and civilization conscious of the fact that Christianity is not a tradition of the past. Christianity is a living spiritual heritage that inspires millions of people and gives meaning to their lives. Churches must, therefore, participate actively in the continual development of modern Europe.

II.8. The social role of the family has changed, and traditional family values have weakened. Even so, families are decisively important for the future of society. We wish to emphasize the responsibility that all of society has to support families. We stress that the marriage of a man and a woman has theological and spiritual significance; it is a spiritual calling. Churches have the task of supporting spouses to commit themselves to a lifelong relationship and to grow in love, mutual respect and the procreation of life. We call upon Churches to support families with children in the Christian upbringing of a new generation.

II.9. Young people are in a vulnerable position in European society. They are subject to many kinds of influences and a flood of information. Many of them have not received Christian upbringing at home, and many of those who have received it become alienated from the Church as they seek their own way. They have spiritual needs, however, and they try to satisfy them in various ways. The Church has the task of engaging in dialogue with young people, supporting them in their spiritual search and guiding them to full spiritual life.

II.10. The Church is an eschatological community, already partaking of the Kingdom of God in this age and bearing witness to it. While being in this world and fulfilling their task, the Church and every individual Christian are not of this world. We partake of God's kingdom, and the ultimate purpose for the Church to exist is to serve the fulfillment of the world to come.

THE FALLEN MAN ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE – EXEGETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Professor Antti Laato

In this essay I will consider to what extent the Bible holds that a person who has fallen into sin can play an active role in his own salvation. Usually this issue has been considered from the angle of humanity's original state at creation (Gen. 1-2) and how the events of Genesis 3 affected humanity's ability to fulfill God's will in the world. I intend to approach the issue from another important Biblical perspective, namely the perspective of covenant theology. The covenant theology of the Old Testament emphasizes the responsibility given to humanity to fulfill God's will in the world. How is covenant theology understood in the overall context of the OT, where the covenant and the lengthy description of the history of Israel are linked together? The covenant theology of the OT was typical of Judaism during Jesus' time, and provides an important background to issues dealt with in the New Testament. Pauline theology in particular is difficult to understand without covenant theology.

1 The Bible – people's thoughts about God, or God's thoughts about people?

We can relate to a text we read in two different ways. A professor reads a student's seminar paper with a critical eye in order to offer instruction. The student's text is the "It" in Martin Buber's categories of "It" versus "Thou". The text is mainly "It" to the professor. The professor's intention is to help the student, so that he or she might learn to write better and with greater methodological precision. The professor would react in a wholly different way to a letter from his or her bishop. This latter text the professor would not read as an object of study, but as part of a dialogue between individuals. There is a dialogue between "I" and "Thou", the professor and the bishop.

In scientific examination, theological texts are usually regarded as if by outside observers, trying to work out an interpretation of the text and whatever background information it can yield. The text is therefore informed by the "I-It" relationship, and the scholar remains firmly in control. The scholar controls the interpretation of the text with the help of different philosophical or theological thought processes. But what if the text were to shy away from these scientifically

useful but nonetheless limited frameworks, and begin a dialogue with us? The text is no longer in our control, but in reading the text a dialogue between "I" and "Thou" is established. This is the kind of dialogue that is at the heart of reading Psalm 139, "O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The reader is not in control of this reading process, but rather, in uttering the words, the reader is under another's control. God's eye watches over him or her, God's understanding comprehends what is in his or her heart. A person who truly reads Psalm 139 cannot be excluded from this "I-Thou" dialogue. Upon delving deeper into the text, the reader is comforted, especially if he or she is distressed: that person is the object of scrutiny of a higher power, God. That person is not alone, God will find him or her, God will seek and eventually find him or her, even in deepest despair.

2 *Humanity's responsibility and the limits of freedom become apparent in a crisis*

The books of the OT call Israel to face its God. The OT is a broad description of Israel's history that highlights people's responsibility to God. This responsibility has been explained using creation theology. As God's creation, humanity is responsible to its creator for all that it does. Christian theologians have debated for centuries to what extent Adam had free will to fulfill God's will before and after the Fall. The Fall that followed creation is generally considered to have had such an impact on human destiny that people themselves can no longer alter it. Through their actions, Adam and Eve brought the reality of sin and death into the world, and this is the world we all live in. In this exegetical essay I will not consider the image of humanity from the angle of creation and the Fall. Instead I will use as my starting point the other argument for humanity's responsibility towards God, namely covenant theology.

Covenant theology is especially important in Deuteronomistic history (Deut.-2 Kings). According to this interpretation, the Babylonian Captivity was a punishment visited by God on a recalcitrant people who failed to live according to the terms of the covenant. Deuteronomy 27-29 contains numerous episodes of blessings and curses that illustrate the law of cause and effect. Honoring the covenant resulted in a blessing, while breaking it resulted in curses. According to Deuteronomy 30:11-18, the words of God's law are clear. Everyone can

understand them and everyone can adhere to them. Israel must therefore make a choice between life and death. The law of cause and effect, the choice between blessing and curses, exemplify the Deuteronomistic conception of the law. Even in Deuteronomistic history, the universal justice of the law of cause and effect is at stake. A particular problem is the fate of King Josiah of Judea. Josiah is characterized as righteous: "He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right or to the left" (2 Kings 22:2). In Deuteronomistic history, Josiah is considered an exemplary king: "Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him" (2 Kings 23:25). Josiah's righteous deeds, all in accordance with the laws of Deuteronomy, did not grant him the blessing promised by God. Having described Josiah as the most righteous of kings, the author acknowledge that God's wrath continued to rain down on Jerusalem because of the sins of Josiah's predecessor, Manasseh: "Still the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, by which His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him" (2 Kings 23:26). After this the description moves on to Josiah's death in the battle of Megiddo against Egypt's Pharaoh Neco (2 Kings 23:29-30).

Deuteronomistic covenant theology could not explain the fate of the pious Josiah. The law of cause and effect was not enough to explain why the righteous king had to die in battle. Nearly 200 years later the author of Chronicles mused on Josiah's fate. His theology emphasized the law of cause and effect even more. Understandably, Josiah's fate was problematic for him. The Chronicler's way of resolving this is by turning the Pharaoh, a worshipper of false gods, into a prophet of God who warns Josiah against doing battle against him. Josiah then acts against the prophetic word and dies as a punishment. (2 Chron. 35:20-24). The Chronicler tried to show how Josiah broke God's commandment and thus chose death and curses.

Elsewhere in the OT we find a similar tension between events and the law of cause and effect. The prophetic literature is full of exhortations to submit to God's will. Otherwise God will inflict a punishment upon His errant people. But there is another angle to the prophetic literature. During the deepest crisis, neither the law of cause and effect nor exhortations to the people to choose the path of life were of any use. In the depths of despair a theocentric event was described: God Himself came to the aid of His people to save them from despair.

Chapters 40-55 of the Book of Isaiah deal with the people's distress during the Babylonian Captivity. The people can no longer see the light from the depths

of their anguish. In the midst of this crisis God arrives like a warrior to aid His people. He is a strong warrior who saves, or a pregnant woman who gives birth to new life!

> "The Lord goes forth like a
> soldier,
> like a warrior He stirs up His
> fury;
> He cries out, He shouts aloud,
> He shows Himself mighty
> against His foes.
> For a long time I have held my
> peace,
> I have kept still and restrained
> myself;
> ow I will cry out like a woman
> in labor, I will gasp and pant.
> I will lay waste mountains and
> hills,
> and dry up all their herbage;
> I will turn the rivers into islands,
> and dry up the pools.
> I will lead the blind
> by a road they do not know,
> by paths they have not known
> I will guide them.
> I will turn the darkness before
> them into light,
> the rough places into level
> ground.
> These are the things I will do,
> and I will not forsake them." (Isaiah 42:13-16)

In Isaiah 40-55 there is a recurring description of God leading the blind and helpless people during the crisis of exile (41:8-16, 17-20; 43:1-7, 14-21; 44:1-5, 21-23). Alongside this there are passages where the people are restored from their blindness and deafness by means of forceful words (42:18-25; 43:22-28). This tension between the renewal achieved by God's word and the exhortation addressed to people raises the theological question of humanity's ability to survive the crises of a world of sin and death. In the Book of Isaiah, people are awoken in the midst of the crisis, but above all they are assured that God is active despite

the crisis. When people are drained of strength and unable to act in a crisis, they are comforted by the knowledge that God is acting on their behalf, and creating something new.
The Books of Jeremiah (31:31-34; 32:37-41) and Ezekiel (34:25; 36:24-27; 37:26) contain promises of a new covenant. In these passages the covenant is defined theocentrically. The new covenant described by Jeremiah is even presented as the opposite of the Sinai covenant, which has been broken (Jer. 31: 31-34). In the new covenant, God Himself is active, using His Spirit to inspire trust and loyalty in people's hearts. During the crisis of the Captivity, the people suffering the punishments of sin could no longer see hope. The people had sunk into apathy and repeated a desperate mocking song: "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. 31:29; Ezek. 18:2). The Lamentations illuminate the deep spiritual crisis that underlies this ditty. They describe the consequences of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Verse 5:7 describes this desperation well: "Our ancestors sinned; they are no more, and we bear their iniquities." In the despair that results from sin, God's word brings comfort. God makes possible what the people themselves cannot accomplish. When people no longer have the strength to seek out God, God seeks them out instead.

The new covenant described by Jeremiah is forged because the people, through their faithlessness, have invalidated their side of the Sinai covenant. In addition to the Sinai covenant, the OT recognizes two more covenants whose validity is not contingent on human fidelity. These are God's covenants with Abraham and David. The foundation of the covenants is God's irrevocable promise of mercy. God promises to show His mercy and care for Abraham. The faithfulness of Abraham's descendants is not a precondition for the covenant, but rather its validity is guaranteed by God's loyalty (Gen. 22:16-18): 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, [17]I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, [18]and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

The covenant forged with David (2 Sam. 7) is also not dependant on whether his descendants remain obedient to God. God will of course punish disobedience (2 Sam 7:14), but the covenant remains in force despite the faithlessness of the people (2 Sam. 7:15-16). During the Captivity, it was the covenants granted to Abraham and David that brought comfort to the people. Therefore, in Isaiah 40-55 references are made both to the covenant with Abraham (Isaiah 41:8; 51:1-3) and with David (Isaiah 55:3-5).

Psalm 89 is a demonstration of how the promise of mercy made to David came under suspicion during the Captivity. The psalm asks, through the collapse of the dynasty, why God did not remain faithful to David. Underlying the psalm is a deep conviction that God will eventually remember His unbreakable promise to David.

Leviticus 26 describes the blessings and curses of the Sinai covenant. The Sinai covenant does not comfort a people suffering as a consequence of sin, instead the passage refers specifically to the promises of mercy given to the patriarchs (Lev. 26:40-42)

These Old Testament examples of the Babylonian Captivity give us a picture of how people's chances of attainting an "I-Thou" relationship with God are limited. An encounter is possible, however, even in times of crisis, when God's word inspires hope in people. An encounter with God is always possible even when people have lost hope. In this way the faith of the covenant, prominent in the OT, and the comforting message that stems from God's omnipotence are in theological dialogue with one another.

3 The problematics of free will as a philosophical problem

In the OT the problematics of free will are not presented as a philosophical problem. The starting point is practical. The Sinai covenant exists between God and the people. The people must live according to the prescripts of the covenant, else they will be punished. On the other hand, in times of crisis God's power to remake the covenant with the people suffering from their sin is made apparent. God seeks out His people and reassures them through His Spirit that the covenant will be remade.

The situation changed when early Judaism based on the OT encountered Greek philosophy and its contemplation of life and humanity's ability to function in the world. Free will had to then also be problematized as a theological question. According to scholars the earliest and clearest example of this is the Book of Sirach (originally written in Hebrew and known to Christians through a Greek translation). Below I will also take into account Ben Sira's Hebrew text, even though it has not survived intact and the Hebrew text was never instructive to the Church, unlike the Greek version. To Lutherans the Book of Sirach is useful reading, but not of equal value to the Hebrew texts of the OT. Freedom of will in particular is addressed in Sirach 15:11-20. The starting point for this discourse is two contrary statements (given in italics): "Do not say, *'It was the Lord's doing*

that I fell away'; for He does not do what He hates. Do not say, *'It was He who led me astray'*; for He has no need of the sinful." ['*anshe chamas* = violent people]

Ben Sira has apparently come into contact with philosophical musings about the origins of evil. The philosophical discourse, whereby people assign part of the blame for their own sin to God, is false according to Ben Sira. The correct question is not "Why does God allow evil in the world?" but "Why do people do evil in the world?" This contemplation leads Ben Sira to formulate the concept, which has since become deeply ingrained in Judaism, regarding freedom of choice. People can and are capable of choosing between good and evil (Sir. 15:14-17):

"It was He who created humankind in the beginning, and He left them in the power of their own free choice. If you choose, you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice. [1]He has placed before you fire and water; stretch out your hand for whichever you choose. Before each person are life and death, and whichever one chooses will be given."

The religious view concerning free will as formulated by Ben Sira is a critical rejection of all attempts to shift the blame for the world's evils onto God. The background to this formulation by Ben Sira is Deuteronomy 30:11-18. In the Deuteronomic context, however, what is taking place is not a philosophical contemplation of the degree to which God is responsible for sin, it is an exhortation to Israel to be faithful to the covenant.

A second theological issue which is difficult to reconcile with human freedom is raised in the Book of Ben Sira: God knows everything in advance and is able to assert His will on the world. According to Sirach 33:7-15, God has created opposites in the world, in accordance with Stoic principles. Good cannot exist without its opposite, evil (cf. Sir. 11:14; 42:23-24). Sirach 33:12, according to which God blesses some and curses others, could easily be interpreted as Ben Sira opposing freedom of choice. For this reason Ben Sira wrote, before this section on God's creation, that sin is not inevitable in the world of opposites. People can and must choose the path dictated by the law of God. This tension between God's omniscience (which seems to imply determinism) and people's freedom of choice becomes a difficult theological problem in medieval Jewish philosophy. It has also proved an unresolvable problem for the Christian Church.

The difficulty of the problem between free choice and determinism is evident in the Greek translation of Sirach 39:25. The original Hebrew reads: "In the beginning He gave good things to the good, to the bad He gave good things and bad things". Ben Sira's grandson, who translated the text into Greek (and has subsequently

been accepted into the canon of most churches), left the word "good" out of the second half of the sentence. In this way a theological stance verging on strict determinism was articulated: "In the beginning He gave good things to the good, to the bad He gave bad things." On the other hand, this translation could be based on an exegesis of Sirach 40:10. This kind of determinism hardly belongs in Ben Sira's theology.

It is possible that Ben Sira's opinions of free will and the oppositions set up during creation were his reaction to the dominant interpretations of his time. E.g., the description of Pharaoh's hardening (Exodus) or 2 Samuel 24 could be misinterpreted to understand that sin stems from God. The statement in Isaiah 45:7 that from God comes all "light and darkness" and all "weal and woe" could be seen as support for strict determinism, where there is not much room for human free will.

4 *Free will as a theological problem in the context of the destruction of Jerusalem*

Above we have tried to describe how the OT contains two contrasting perspectives on free will: on the one hand people are exhorted to remain in the covenant with God and on the other hand people are comforted by the mercy and loyalty of the omnipotent God. The tension between these two viewpoints is such that it cannot be easily expressed in philosophical or theological language. This becomes apparent in Ben Sira but also among those who come after him. Around the time the NT was written, the problem of the destruction of Jerusalem had to be considered within the framework of the OT. These interpretations clearly demonstrate how a difficult crisis could lead to very different interpretations. In order for us to better understand how the issue of free will has been handled in the NT, I will use as background the Syrian apocalypse of Baruch (2 Baruch) and the originally Jewish text of 4 Ezra (preserved in Latin) contained within 2 Ezra. Both texts were written within a few decades of the destruction of the temple, and they have been preserved for us because they were of interest to Christians (a similar phenomenon as with the works of the Jewish writers Josephus and Philo). Even though these passages are not instructive to the Church today, they give us the opportunity to understand different responses to the OT that could come about in times of crisis.

Because both 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra are Jewish texts, their authors recognize human free will in principle. However, their ways of emphasizing this freedom during crisis differ. The author of 2 Baruch considers people to be responsible for the

consequences of their own sin. Adam sinned and was punished. Through him much evil entered the world (2 Baruch 48:42-43), but only when his descendants sin themselves do they experience the same fate as Adam, as the author expresses it: "we each become our own Adam" (2 Baruch 54:19). 4 Ezra's approach to humanity's responsibility for sin is different. According to the author, Adam first fell due to the temptation from his evil heart and brought about the disease in all humankind. All of Adam's descendants live under the domination of sin (4 Ezra 3:21-22). Adam's sin was like a seed which, once sown, grew and produced much evil. (4 Ezra 4:30). The author addresses Adam rhetorically with the question (4 Ezra 7:118): "O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the Fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants (*non est factum solius tuus casus sed et nostrum qui ex te aduenimus*)." The author of 4 Ezra sees the corruption of sin as a cosmic force, which entered the world through Adam. Adam's Fall placed humanity in a weak position and they cannot set themselves free.

The author of 2 Baruch emphasizes that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were themselves responsible for the destruction of the city. They had broken the covenant with God (2 Baruch 45:14) and for that reason God sent His own angels to destroy the temple (2 Baruch 5:3; 7:1). In 4 Ezra on the other hand the issue is examined in light of the cosmic corruption brought about by Adam. The author knows that every person is sinful. He then asks, whether the God of Justice is capable of differentiating between sinners. Rome's sin is greater than that of the Jews. Nevertheless it is the Jews who are made to suffer in God's world (4 Ezra 4:32-33) when the godless Roman soldiers rush in to destroy the Jerusalem sanctuary (4 Ezra 4:23). In the end, the author asks his God: "If thou dost really hate thy people, they should be punished at thy own hands" (4 Ezra 5:30).

Whereas in 2 Baruch God's justice is seen as having been served in the destruction of the temple as punishment for sin, in 4 Ezra the whole event is seen as a theological conundrum regarding God's justice. The author of 4 Ezra asks God's archangel for awareness to understand the meaning of what has happened. The dialogue between Ezra and Uriel (4 Ezra 5:34-35) is revealing as the author is unable to explain the destruction of the temple theologically, unlike the author of 2 Baruch: "And [Ezra] said,…my reins pain me every hour, while I labor to comprehend the way of the most High, and to seek out part of his judgment. And [Uriel] said unto me, Thou canst not. And I said, Wherefore, Lord? whereunto was I born then?"

The author of 4 Ezra is not arguing against humans having free will to choose between life and death, blessing and curses (cf. 7:18, 92; 8:56), but he is unable

to use free will to explain the suffering of exile, unlike the author of 2 Baruch. In 4 Ezra 4:127-128, Uriel refers to Moses' words in Deuteronomy 30: "For this is the life whereof Moses spoke unto the people while he lived, saying, Choose thee life, that thou may live. Nevertheless they believed not him, nor yet the prophets after him, no nor me which have spoken unto them."

The comparison between 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra gives us a good idea of how the theme of "free will" in Judaism might be actualized in a time of crisis. The author of 2 Baruch almost twists the knife in the wound: the people of Jerusalem got what they deserved. The author of 2 Baruch interprets the events within the framework of Deuteronomistic history. The author of 4 Ezra distances himself from the law of cause and effect in this crisis. The destruction renders him mute and helpless. He is hoping that God's omnipotence will present the miraculous opportunity to create something new and lasting as a consequence of the disaster in Jerusalem. 4 Ezra concludes with a description of how Ezra is instructed to publish 24 books (the number of books in the OT according to the Jewish reckoning), but leaves 70 books unpublished. These unpublished books contain the marvellous secrets of God's wisdom. Doubtless anyone who studied them would be able to understand the reasons for the destruction of Jerusalem.

2 Baruch and 4 Ezra describe two different models of interpretation for the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place after Paul's letters had been written. They give an indication of how the covenant theology central to the OT was interpreted in different ways during the crisis. The more pessimistic attitude towards humanity's ability to fulfill God's will exemplified by 4 Ezra crops up in Judaism even earlier. The Qumran texts (especially the Hodayot Psalms) exhibit the idea of people who are weak and who in a world of sin must struggle against their sinful nature. These opposing views (the view based in covenant theology of humanity's ability and responsibility to fulfill God's will and humanity struggling under the oppression of the cosmic force of sin) give us a good indication of the theological currents that influenced the theological leanings of early Christianity.

Summary thus far:
We have tried to gain an impression of how the problem between free will and determinism comes about in early Judaism. This will help us to better understand what Paul has in mind when writing Romans 9-11. In these three chapters Paul makes frequent references to God's choice and brings up the hardening caused by God. Before we begin our discussion of Romans 9-11, we will examine these two concepts of choice and hardening as they appear in the OT.

5 God's choice

The Hebrew verb Bāchar (to choose) (LXX: eklegō) is often used when speaking of God's election. Many OT narratives contain theologically important perspectives on God's choice. By examining these OT passages more closely, we can isolate four perspectives on God's choice.

1. God's choice demonstrates His sovereign power to direct world history: God chooses Abraham and Israel. The members of the family of Levi are chosen to be priests and the priesthood is closed to members of the other tribes of Israel. David is chosen as King in Saul's stead.

2. God's choice is not dependent on human merit: When God chose the people of Israel, it was not because they were better than others (Deut. 7:6-8; 10:14-15). David was the youngest brother, but he was still chosen to be king. Merit does not typically feature in the choices God makes.

3. Humans cannot question the Lord's choice: God's promise of the Promised Land is realized for Abraham and his descendants. Moses' leadership cannot be questioned (4 Moses 12, 16) without dire consequences. The choice of David as king was opposed (Saul, Shimei and Absalom), but God kept His promise to David.

4. Being God's chosen one does not automatically guarantee success: The entire book of Amos questions Israel's right to appeal to God's promises of mercy, when the people have given up serving God. (Amos 5:14-15) Amos 9:7 crushes this false confidence when it makes reference to the fact that God led the destinies of other nations as well. Similar criticism is to be found in the Books of the Prophets (e.g., Ezekiel 16:3-6). The prophets often criticize the people's reliance on Zion Theology (i.e., the belief, as in Psalm 46, that God will protect Jerusalem): Micah 3:5-12, Jer. 7 and 26.

6 Hardening

One of the central themes in predestination, "hardening", can be problematized, especially from the perspective of the OT. The OT stories of hardening are seen from a dynamic perspective, on the one hand from a theocentric perspective (God

hardens), and other hand from an anthropological perspective (a person falls deeper into sin).

1. Pharaoh's hardening: in the story at the beginning of Exodus the phrases "God hardened Pharaoh's heart" and "Pharaoh hardened his own heart" go hand in hand. This is not an attempt to describe how God in some sadistic sense is responsible for Pharaoh's hardening, but, rather, God forces Pharaoh to make a choice. Pharaoh can't remain neutral, so when faced with a decision, he hardens his heart. Thus God's hardening is accomplished.

2. God "murders" King Ahab. 1 Kings 22 tells the story of how Micah, son of Imlah, reveals to Ahab God's plan of hardening. God's intention is to have Ahab killed in the war against the Syrians at Ramot-Gilead (1 Kings 22:15-23). But when the prophet reveals this plan, God gives Ahab one more chance to turn back and be saved.

3. At the beginning of 1 Kings 22, Ahab is hardly pure as the driven snow, but 1 Kings 21 tells us, e.g., about his miscarriage of justice (Naboth and his vineyard). The situation in 1 Kings 22 is that God's plan for hardening will expedite Ahab's punishment. Ahab is given his last chance, but he does not take it; he rushes off to war and is destroyed.

4. Isaiah is sent to harden the people: Isaiah 6:9-10 is difficult for understanding why being a prophet is said to be pleasant. Why is the prophet sent to harden his own people? According to Isaiah 1:1, Isaiah was making his proclamations in the days of Uzziah. Isaiah's temple vision happened the year Uzziah died (Isaiah 6:1), and it is not necessarily a calling vision, but marks a change in Isaiah's prophetic activity. The prophet already undoubtedly had experience, by the time of the temple vision, of the intransigence of the people when it came to hearing the word of God. Isaiah now sees the Holy God, who can no longer tolerate the people's godless wanderings. In order to condemn His people more quickly, God orders Isaiah to harden them (Isaiah 6:9-11). Like Ahab, the whole nation now stands on the brink of destruction. The flame of the wrath of God flickers above it. God wants the people to pay the debt of sin by becoming hardened. Isaiah, however, has in another context already made God's plan known, and so the people still have a chance to avoid their fate. Those who wish to avoid this fate must act immediately. They must, like

Isaiah, confess their sins in order to be saved. The idea of Isaiah 6:9-10 is that the people must now react to the word of God. They cannot remain indifferent to it, as they are threatened with hardening and ruin. Whoever does not turn around quickly will soon no longer have the opportunity to do so.

What can we learn from these three OT narratives?

1. The starting point in each of these narratives is that hardening is not some cruel game God plays with people. It reveals a situation where people have shown, through their lifestyle, that they wish to live apart from God and without regard for His commandments.

2. In each of these cases, people had the chance to turn back before the hardening took place. A person who clings to sin will, however, when addressed by God, fall into a deep darkness and no longer be able to see things properly.

3. The stories encourage the audience to avoid similar stubborn behavior.

We are now ready to look at Romans 9-11.

7 The relationship between anthropology and predestination in Paul

Chapters 9-11 of Paul's letter to the Romans are the result of careful theological thinking. Paul's letter to the Romans is an attempt to come to grips with the problematic relationship between the believers of the Gospel and the Jews who reject it. Paul does not, in the manner of the author of 2 Baruch, criticize the Jews for their stubbornness in rejecting the Messiah sent by God. The unbelief of the majority of Jews is a difficult problem for Paul. He examines their unbelief with humility, presumably because of his own spiritual experience on the road to Damascus. Walking down this road, Paul was in no way spiritually prepared to receive a calling from Jesus. Paul was focused on destroying Jesus' followers. Nevertheless it was this ill-prepared zealot whom Jesus stopped on the road to Damascus and led to the truth. Walking on the road to Damascus, Paul had not, like in Deuteronomy 30:11-20, chosen life but death, he had not chosen blessing but curses. God decided differently, and God's decision of grace changed Paul's life. The man of death and curses became by the grace of God a partaker of life and blessing. This life and blessing is in Christ. Paul's life was the opposite of Pharaoh's life. Like Pharaoh, Paul was acting as an enemy of God's congregation. However, God decided to save Paul. When speaking about the hardening of

Pharaoh, Paul cannot criticize God for having decided to save Saul who had persecuted the congregation. Paul cannot explain why he was granted mercy and Pharaoh was not (Rom. 9:14-21).

Paul's thinking in Romans bears greater resemblance to the way the author of 4 Ezra sees sin as a cosmic force in the world. In Rom. 5:12, Paul describes how through Adam sin entered the world like a cosmic force. With sin came death, to all people. Rom. 5:12 contains an interesting problem of interpretation. Paul's words can be taken to mean either that death came to all people because (*ef' ho*) they had sinned, or, as the text is translated in Latin (Vetus Latina), "death has come to all people, everyone has sinned in him (in *quo*)." Both Ambrose and Augustine interpreted this section according to the Vetus Latina. The formulation in the Vetus Latina gives a clearer picture of the consequences of Adam's Fall than the Greek text, which is open to different interpretations. In Paul's theology, Adam's Fall nonetheless has cosmic implications. In Rom. 5:17-19, Paul continues to clarify how sin entered the world through Adam and took control of humanity.

In Romans 7, this domination of sin is further specified by showing how God's law inspires in the corrupted human mind a desire to act against God's law (7:7-11). A different and clarifying picture is provided by 1 Cor. 15:56, where death is compared to a scorpion, whose stinger is death and whose venom is the law. A fallen person, of whom Paul uses the phrase "flesh and blood", cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50). But in the resurrection of the righteous this mortality is cloaked in immortality and one is ready for the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:53-54).

The power of sin in the world and in a person's life cannot render void God's omnipotence. God can, through Jesus Christ, save a person's dying body (Rom. 7:24-25). The victory over sin achieved by God through Jesus Christ is the focus of Romans 9-11. Despite the domination of sin, God's choice is accomplished in the world. No power can isolate God's own from the protection of His love. Everyone, including spirit powers, is helpless before God's plan of salvation (Rom. 8:31-39).

In Romans 9-11, Paul uses various OT texts to illuminate how God's choice has been realized in the world. God's choice has even happened when people, oppressed by sin, have despaired of whether there are any people left keeping the faith. Paul quotes passages from Hosea and Isaiah in which God selects the remnants from among the recalcitrant people (Hos. 1:10; 2:23; Isaiah 1:9; 10:22-23; 65:1-2). Paul writes of how God reminds the prophet Elijah that the remnant of the faithful exists despite the power of sin and unbelief.

Especially worthy of mention is Paul's way of interpreting Deuteronomy 30:11-18 (Rom. 10:4-21). We saw above how Ben Sira derived his own theological take on free will from this passage. People are capable of choosing to fulfill God's will. To Paul this passage is Christological. The "word" that is close to humanity, in its heart, is the Gospel's word about Christ and his death on the cross. People don't have to work for their own salvation by bringing Christ down from heaven or raising Him from the dead. The word of the Gospel is offered to everyone to receive in faith. This word of the Gospel means "the end of the law" (Rom. 10:4), i.e., that righteousness is achieved by believing in the Word of the Gospel, not by following the word of the law.

The word of the Gospel awakens faith in the world, and thus it becomes apparent whom God has chosen (Rom. 8:29-30). This choice is based on God's grace and is not dependent on an individual's merits. People are not able to comprehend God's choices. "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace. What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, as it is written, 'God gave them a sluggish spirit, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.'"(Rom. 11:6-8)

Paul goes on to reject several questions derived from logic about God's sovereign election and advises Christians to humbly praise God, whose wondrous choices they are incapable of comprehending. In a way, Paul returns to the words of Psalm 139. People are not able to analyze God's wondrous deeds (Rom. 11:33-36). God, on the other hand, is able to find out what is going on in people's minds and break the cosmic hold sin has over their lives.

Paul's letters contain many exhortations for Christians. Their purpose is to make Christians wake up and recognize God's acts of grace and act according to His will. God's sovereign election comes out in those places where life is examined from the perspective of sin. In the face of the cosmic power of sin, people have no options. God's election through Christ breaks sin's hold.

8 The Lutheran conception of original sin from a biblical perspective

In article 2 of the Augsburg Confession, original sin is defined thus: "since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin." (The expression "begotten in the natural way" in this

case means that Jesus Christ, thanks to his virgin birth, is free of the corruption of sin). In what follows I shall explain how this Lutheran outlook has attempted to make sense of the Bible's teaching about the consequences of the Fall.

According to Genesis 3:13, the serpent betrayed humanity. This is usually interpreted as meaning that the serpent lied to humanity. People should have now been able, like God, to know good and evil (Gen. 3:4-5). This had not happened and people needed to vent their disappointment (Gen. 3:12-13). This interpretation stumbles at Genesis 3:22: "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." What was promised by the serpent did in fact come to pass. So how should we interpret the serpent's deception? Genesis 3:14-15 and the events that follow it provide the proper theological perspective.

After the Fall, humanity entered into a state of war with evil (represented by the serpent). Evil wants to penetrate man, "hit man on the head", whereas man wishes to crush evil, "stomp on the serpent's head". The Hebrew expression "the seed of the wife" has two meanings here. On the one hand it refers to the entire human race which is locked in a struggle with evil. On the other hand it is a prophecy of the "seed of the wife" that would one day rise and conquer evil. This "seed" is Jesus Christ, as the Church Fathers later explained.

Humanity's battle with evil commences in Genesis 4. Genesis 4:7 describes how sin stalked Cain's heart like a serpent, but Cain was urged to control sin and to repress it. Cain is not able to control its power and falls into sin. This is where the serpent's treachery becomes apparent. The serpent only told people half the truth. People do gain knowledge of good and evil, but they lose the ability to control evil. They know what is good and right but find it harder to act on it. They know what is evil, but can no longer prevent evil from taking charge of their lives.

Genesis 6:5-8 continues the description of humanity's corruption. The Lord has to admit the consequences of the Fall. People's thoughts and deeds are always only evil. This is why God decides to destroy humankind. God does grant Noah clemency and decides to spare his family. The story of Noah cannot be understood within the OT to suggest that humanity after the flood is somehow cleansed or refined. The content of Genesis 8:21 is closely linked to Genesis 6:5. It reveals that even in the era after Noah and his descendants, humanity's destiny is to be corrupted by sin: people's thoughts and actions are evil even from their youth.

Not even the choice of Abraham and later the Sinai covenant between God and Israel was able to make people better. The OT's salvation history is mainly a description of Israel's fall. The Sinai covenant was a mutually binding union.

It was based on God's election and acts of mercy, when He led His people out of slavery in Egypt. God promised to protect His people and bless them, and the people should live obedient to God, following His commandments. In the historical description of the OT, however, Israel falls repeatedly, a process that culminates in the punishment visited by God on His recalcitrant people: King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is allowed to destroy Jerusalem and the temple and lead the people into exile.

During the exile the forging of a new covenant between God and the people becomes a theme of hope (Jer. 31:31-34; 32:39-31; Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:25-27). The new covenant differs crucially from the old Sinai covenant. It is based entirely on God's forgiveness and mercy. In this covenant God Himself acts through His Spirit so that the people receive the strength to live in the covenant and fulfill God's will. Jeremiah 31:31-34 presents this covenant as different to the Sinai covenant. The Sinai covenant was broken, but in the new covenant God Himself will ensure that His people live according to the Lord's law.

The NT introduces us to this new covenant, which has been realized in Christ. In believing in Christ, Christians receive from God the strength to live in the new covenant, and perform good deeds in accordance with God's will. Paul's theology in particular brings out sin's power over the world and in humanity's "flesh and blood" on the one hand, and the new life in Christ created by God's Spirit on the other. "Flesh and blood" cannot submit to God's will (Gal. 5:17) or inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50). A person with a soul (*psychikos anthropos*) will not receive what belongs to the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). With the help of God's Word, the Holy Spirit guides Christians – who still have sinful flesh – to perform God's will (Rom. 7:24-25; Gal. 5-17). Like Paul, a Christian can state that he himself is no longer living, but Christ lives in him (Gal. 2:20) and influences all his good wishes and deeds (Phil. 2:13). Christians are not robots, but objects of God's work. Just as the Holy Spirit acted in Creation and what did not exist came into being, so the Spirit acts through the promise of the Gospel for the person enslaved by sin, so that the powerless receive strength. Just as God's own word is part of His nature, then whoever receives the promise of God's word partakes of divine nature: "Thus He has given us, through these things, His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants in the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4)

9 Conclusions

The central points of this essay can be condensed as follows:

1. God's word and its promises are living and, through the Holy Spirit, inspire faith and trust in the listener. God makes it possible for people to face Him.

2. The Sinai covenant between God and Israel entailed obligations from both parties. God promised to protect the people and the people promised to live in accordance with God's will.

3. The account of Israel's history demonstrates that the Sinai covenant alone cannot define the relationship between God and the people. Alongside Sinai, promises made to David and the patriarchs emphasize God's absolute adherence to his covenant in spite of the fact that David's and the patriarchs' descendants failed to keep the faith. They were punished, but God's mercy is not removed from them.

4. In accordance with the Lutheran distinction between law and Gospel it could be said that the OT contrasts the Sinai covenant (based on the law) with the promise of mercy made to David and the patriarchs (based on mercy), from which people can draw comfort when they can no longer use their own resources in a crisis that they have been tricked into by sin.

5. The problematics of free will became a hot topic for Judaism c. 200 BC when OT texts and Greek philosophical musings on humans' ability to function in the world meet in the texts of Ben Sira. This created a long-lasting theological and philosophical conundrum that still has not been adequately explained either in Judaism or Christianity.

6. As a result, two types of theological interpretations of spiritual crises have emerged: one emphasizes people's responsibility to God in the manner of the Sinai covenant, the other emphasizes God's sovereign actions towards suffering people based on the promises made to David and the patriarchs. These different viewpoints are not mutually exclusive but describe God's actions in times of crisis from different perspectives.

7. The most important interpretative tradition for NT anthropology is the one that regards sin as a cosmic force which enslaves people: “everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.” (John 8:34) According to Paul, this cosmic force entered the world through Adam and Eve’s Fall.

8. Paul experienced the breaking of sin’s hold over his own life as a result of divine intervention on the road to Damascus. Just like Pharaoh, Paul was a sworn enemy of God’s congregation. Pharaoh was hardened but Paul was granted clemency by God. Paul cannot explain this theologically to himself or others (Rom. 9:14-21).

9. God’s promises of grace in Jesus Christ do not turn people into robots, but rather inspire in them the desire and the will to turn towards God. The Christian Church has always proclaimed the promises of God’s grace to people subjugated by the cosmic force of sin. These promises can be seized, and thus people can be freed from the corruption of sin by God’s grace and become part of divine nature.

10. When God’s Holy Spirit awakens faith in people’s hearts, this event can never be completely understood. A Christian acknowledges that he cannot believe of his own power or reason, but rather the Holy Spirit has enlightened him and guided him to the path of faith, to live in accordance with God’s will.

HUMANS IN THE BIBLE (AN EXEGETICAL PERSPECTIVE)

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1 The Old Testament

The holy texts of the Old Testament do not contain any systematic teaching about humans, i.e., anthropology as a science, just as they do not contain any systematic teaching about God, i.e., theology as a science. The Bible does not discuss God and humans as scientific abstractions but as living beings who share a personal connection. But if we do wish to speak of biblical anthropology, we must above all mention the passage in Genesis (2:7) that talks about the creation of humans: **"then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground,* and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being."** This phrase contains what Gerhard von Rad referred to as Old Testament anthropology's "locus classicus". In it, humans' basic essence is described with two phrases:

Humans are **dust**, just as Adam was formed from "*adamá*" (Hebr. "earth"), and returns to dust (cf. p. 19). Here attention is focused on the fact that humans are the result of creation, in essence completely tied to the earth, transitory and weak.

And yet this clod of earth became a living human! The Lord God breathed the breath of life into his "nostrils" and made him a "living being". This is not about the immortal soul or the divine spark blown into humans. This is about breath, the life force, that allows humans to live and move as long as God allows them to keep this gift. For this breath comes from God and remains entirely under His control. "**when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. [3]When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground."** (Psalm 104:29–30, cf. Job 34:14–15).

Human life is borrowed. God controls the breath of life. Thus humans are simultaneously entirely of the earth, formed from dust, and in living they are entirely tied to God, every moment and with every breath dependent on God and His gift.

2 Apostle Paul and Hellenism

Turning to the anthropology of the New Testament, we shall examine the anthropological concepts used in the Apostle Paul's letters. We shall do this primarily because the apostle Paul is the most "theoretical" of the New Testament writers. Secondly, this subject has been studied the most. I am inclined to highlight those factors that might seem unusual and seem to differ from traditional concepts of humans. It is of course widely known how much ancient Greek philosophy, especially Plato's so called "idealism", has influenced Christian theology. This influence was a natural consequence of the shifting of the focus of Christianity from Palestine to the Hellenistic world. From ancient times the Hellenistic world had employed a dualistic concept of humanity (in its different forms). To illustrate, Greek dualism can be characterized using the ancient saying: "sōma – sēma", i.e., "the body is a grave, a coffin". The grave of what? The grave of the soul. It was considered that the body and soul were of different substance. The soul was eternal and came from the ideal world. The body was temporal and material and the source of the soul's suffering and lusts. From this perspective the resurrection of the body seems insane and even blasphemous, which was shown to Paul in Athens (Acts 17:32) and also in Corinth (1 Cor. 15:32). The main reason why the Greeks could not understand Paul lay in that they were speaking "different anthropological languages". The same words implied different concepts. Paul and his Greek audience were operating in different "coordinate systems" – the Biblical and the Hellenistic.

3 Hellenism and interpreting the Bible

The later interpretations of Biblical texts in the spirit of Hellenistic anthropology became entrenched in Christian dogmatics and even more so in public consciousness. This has persisted from the end of the first century of our era until very recently. The formulaic "analysis" of humans as formed from interdependent parts of different substance has given rise to the doctrine of dichotomy and trichotomy, and it has affected the church's folklore and the ascetic practice, hymnography, poetry and literature. It could be said that all of European culture, as far as its conception of humans goes, is based on the Hellenistic formula. Even Freud's psychoanalysis, which is as far from religion as it can be, is based on a tri-partite formula: the Ego, Id and Superego.

Naturally, this all demonstrates the vivacity and utility of the Hellenistic formula. But in the detailed exegetical study of biblical texts this formula might lead to misinterpretations, and a scholar does not have the right to analyze texts using

anthropological postulations and axioms, that while commonplace to us, are foreign to them.

4 The special features of Paul's anthropology

There is no abstract theology or abstract anthropology in the Bible. For example, when Paul is speaking about humans, he always examines them in relation to God. Every statement about God is a statement about humans and vice versa. In this sense, Paul's theology is anthropology, and inseparably linked with soteriology and Christology. The lack of scientific rigor is evident in the very liberal use of anthropological terms.

The basic anthropological terms that Paul uses are body, spirit, flesh and conscience. The less significant are terms such as soul, reason, heart, the outward and inner selves, among others. In his letters, which are very concrete and situational, the apostle does not construct any sort of scientific anthropology that would describe "the phenomenon called man". In exegetical analysis it must be kept in mind that Paul can use one and the same terms with different meanings. There are many reasons for this plurality of meaning. Paul himself came from a Jewish background which had to a certain extent adopted Hellenistic culture. He wrote his letters in Greek; the structure of his thoughts were determined by Semitic, Biblical roots; in his quotations the apostle mainly used the Septuagint, where as we know, the same Hebrew word could be translated with a variety of Greek words; and, finally, the Paul did not shy away from using the common, day-to-day language that was employed in his Hellenized surroundings.

5 Human integrity

Let us examine some of the anthropological concepts that Paul used in his letters. The basic concept that Paul uses to describe human life is sōma, body. It is wholly possible to replace the word "body" with the words "person" and "individual" and with personal pronouns: my body = me, his body = him, etc. In Rudolph Bultmann's words: "people do not have bodies, people are bodies" (R. Bultmann, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, 8. Aufl., Tűbingen 1980, 195). Paul cannot conceive of a person without a body. For this reason he does not image life after death as disembodied, even though the body of the resurrection is of course not a physical body, a body with a soul, but a "spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44), a body of glory (Phil. 3:21). The body should also not be considered a mould, filled with some sort of material (fleshly or spiritual). The body is a person as an entity. It is

noteworthy that Paul never uses the word body to refer to the deceased, a dead body, even though it would be possibly according to the linguistic conventions of the Septuagint.

We see, feel and acknowledge other people, and we sense ourselves as a body. In other words, the body is a person in its objective reality, i.e., the person as object. It is interesting that this concept of the body is not only evident in Greek but also in, e.g., English: anybody, everybody, somebody. As an object, the body can become the target of external forces that enslave it: "body of sin" (Rom. 6:6), "body of death" (Rom. 7:24). On the other hand, the body can be liberated from the slavery of sin and death through adoption and redemption (Rom. 8:23).

6 *Some misunderstandings of interpretation*

The interpretation of 1 Cor. 6:13, 18 can be cited as an example of the misinterpretation of the concepts of "body" and "human". In verses 12–18 the apostle employs the style of diatribe, i.e., an imagined debate with opponents. He often employs this style, especially in the Letter to the Romans. Some of the Corinthians understand their freedom in Christ to mean that they are free to commit sin. "All things are lawful for me," they say. Paul counters: "but not all things are beneficial… I will not be dominated by anything" (6:12). The Corinthians reply flippantly: "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,* and God will destroy both one and the other." In other words, they equate human existence with the activities of the material mortal world. Their thoughts are as follows: food, drink and sex are needs for this world and they have no significance for eternal life. Paul rejects their ideas: "The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." (6:13) Paul found it degrading to think of humans as merely a "stomach". Humans are not merely "stomachs" they are "bodies", whole personalities. And as such, as "bodies", they belong to the Lord, just as the Lord sacrificed Himself for humans, for the "bodies". This passage has always caused problems for interpreters of the Bible. "This passage is unclear," wrote Saint Theophan the Recluse (Commentary on the First Letter to the Corinthians, 2nd Edition, Moscow 1893, 235). The difficulty lies not only in that commentators have not noticed Paul's use of the polemical diatribe style. The difficulty lies also in that the concept of the "body" has not been understood in the Pauline way to mean the human in its entirety, but it has been understood as just the physical, fleshly body. Saint Theophan continues: "For any light to be shed on this passage, we should not in our thoughts separate our bodies from our souls within ourselves."

Chapter 6 verse 18 is even more difficult to interpret. The Corinthians do not give up but continue to debate against Paul: "Every sin that a person commits is outside the body". In other words, any sin, including fornication, only affects a person's outward, mortal side. Paul responds: "But the fornicator sins against the body itself." In other words, sex affects the *whole* person, even his or her deepest essence. Interpreters of the Bible once again fail to separate the Corinthians' parry from Paul's riposte and explain fornication as a bodily impurity: "After vainglorious or vengeful deeds no one cares to wash… but after fornication we go to clean ourselves…" (St John Chrysostom, ibid., 242)

Naturally, the special meaning of the word "body" is important given what Jesus Christ said at the Last Supper: "This is my body" (1 Cor. 11:24). It is well known what sort of disgusting consequences have arisen from the changes in the meaning of this word, so that the word "body" is taken to exclusively mean material flesh, almost like a dead body. (It is sufficient to recall the famous description of the Eucharist in L.N. Tolstoy's novel *The Resurrection*, where the Eucharist is presented as some sort of distorted cannibalism.) In this context it should be mentioned that John the Evangelist uses the word "flesh" in the same context. But John's vocabulary differs from Paul's: to him "flesh" means the same as "body" does to Paul.

7 The connection between anthropology and soteriology

The soteriological aspect that has to do with the conception of humans as σώμα is already evident in how this word is pronounced and in its etymological roots. Thus *soma* (body) is an indivisible unit. (Synonyms one might mention are Greek *atomos* and Latin *individuum*). *Soma* is *a-tomos* (non-divisible), the negation of all *toma* (division), including dichotomy and trichotomy. Nevertheless, in reality people are "divisible": they fall ill, suffer, and fall apart in death. They have no true σώμα, no true body, integrity. Integration, the restoration of the unity of the body is called sōtēria. "Soteria means I become sōs, integrated, complete" (S. Horuzhij, The Phenomenology of Ascesis. Moscow, 1998, 47). This word is translated as "salvation" but it really means "integration" (a person becomes integrate, receives a true body). Similarly, Sōtēr (Savior) actually means "Integrator". The miracles of healing that play such an important role in the Gospels, aimed to provide a symbolic model of humans' ultimate "integration". A truly integrate, indivisible and undecaying body can only be received in the bodily resurrected Lord, in the "body of the resurrection". Only in the Lord is a person cured of the disease of sin and death.

8 The Eschatological Aspect

The notion intrinsic to humankind of belief in life after death took different forms in ancient societies. These different beliefs can roughly be divided into three main groups:

1. Belief in rebirth, which was typical of ancient India

2. The pessimistic view, according to which people after death descend to a subterranean world (Gk. Hades). There they are not properly people, but shadows of people. Some linguists derive the word *haidēs* from the word *a-idēs*, meaning a non-visible place, which is not visible and from which nothing can be seen. Not much can be said about it either. The partial and temporary transformation of these shadows into living beings can only be accomplished through magic: either through blood sacrifice or spiritism. This is the view that was held in Mesopotamia and ancient Greece.

3. The optimistic view, according to which after death people retain their individual consciousness. In moving to the next world people are first judged. Additionally, they exist in the "hereafter" either as fully "material" beings, just like on earth (Egypt) or as "ideal", disembodied "souls" (Classical Greece and Hellenism).

4. The Bible does not have a unified doctrine on the afterlife. Israel borrowed its concepts from the nations and cultures around it. The doctrine of rebirth is not characteristic of the Bible. The most entrenched was the concept of hell (*aid, šeol*). Šeol is the underground realm of the dead. It should be emphasized that it specifically meant the kingdom of the dead, not the living. Life is given only by God, through His Spirit. When the Spirit is taken away, people stop being alive and in fact stop being human. Šeol is not inhabited by people but by dead shadows (*nefaim*). The world of the Bible is large and diverse. One can also find traces of animism, which was an inseparable part of all ancient cultures. But it can be argued that the canonical texts that predate Hellenism do not contain an equivalent concept to the Greek concept of the soul. Šeol is not the realm of souls (*nefešim*).

As the cloud fades and vanishes, so those who go down to Sheol do not come up; they return no more to their houses, nor do their places know them anymore. (Job 7:9–10)

But whoever is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. [5]The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no more reward, and even the memory of them is lost. [6]Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished; never again will they have any share in all that happens under the sun… Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going. (Eccl. 9:4–6, 10)

The soul is life. But šeol, the grave, is not the place of the living but of the dead. These deceased may at times show some sign of life, e.g., through necromancy (1 Sam. 28), which was strictly forbidden by the Law. The dead whom God has forsaken, do not know Him (Psalm 88, 5–13), they are dust and they have no live within themselves (Gen 1:24–25; Psalm 104:29; Sir. 16:31). From this it follows that the dead, unlike the living, have no responsibility for how they live their lives: **"For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity."** (Ecclesiastes 3:19)

Even after the announcement of the resurrection had been received, many Jews adhered to their old, pessimistic view (Sadducees).

The optimistic hope of becoming living (or resurrection) existed simultaneously with the view that denied life after death, and it found literary expression in very old books of the Old Testament. **The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.** (1 Sam. 2:6**) But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me.** (Psalm 49:15) **Nevertheless I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. [2]You guide me with your counsel, and afterwards you will receive me with honor.** (Psalm 73:23–24) The tales of Enoch and Elijah gave hope that šeol might not be the lot of all people. The hope of the possibility of life after death is most clearly expressed in the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 24–27).

Belief in the resurrection of the dead and judgment after death became very common around the mid-2nd century B.C. **Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth[*] shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. [3]Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky,[*] and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.** (Dan. 12:2–3) **… the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.** (2 Macc. 7:9)

For the first time, the dead are being prayed for: **For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. [45]But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin.** (2 Macc. 12:44–45)

The image of the "fires of hell" began to appear in apocryphal literature at this time. The influence of the Platonism of the Hellenistic period created the concept of the immortality of the soul among Diaspora Jews: **But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality** (Wisdom 3:1–4). This doctrine is also partly evident in later New Testament writings: **When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given** (Rev. 6:9) **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, [23]and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect** (Hebrews 12:22–23).

THE PROSPECTS OF THE WILL OF SINFUL MEN AND THOSE MADE RIGHTEOUS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BELIEF IN THE HOLY TRIUNE GOD AND THE MORAL ACTIVITY OF MAN

Professor Hans-Olof Kvist

Before the Triune God

The *Mass or Eucharist* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is celebrated with an initial benediction in the name of the Triune God. After this the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man are emphasized. Among the most usual introductory words are, for example, "The Lord our God lives in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit. Because we have come before Him, let us confess to Him our sins and our guilt…" and "We have come before the face of God to ask of Him repose for our spirit, soul and body… God is holy and we are sinful. Let us confess to Him our sins and pray for forgiveness…" The regular confession goes: "I confess before you, holy God, that I have been a sinner since my birth. In the manner of my fathers I have sinned against your holy will and committed sin in thought and word, in deed and through negligence. I have not loved you with all my heart nor have I loved my neighbor as myself. I know that for my sins I deserve eternal condemnation, if you judge me according to your holiness and righteousness…"

How similarly do believers belonging to different churches express their position before Holy God, when they, whether new or experienced in prayer, observe the exhortation of the Apostle Paul to ceaseless prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), pray in the name of Jesus: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" (cf. Luke 18:13) or when they, in confessing their sins, entreat: "O most gracious of all, crucified Lord Jesus Christ. Have mercy on me, the sinner" or when they sing in the Kyrie eleison prayer "Lord have mercy on us, Christ have mercy on us, Lord have mercy on us" or during the Eucharist "O Lamb of God, you who bear the sin of the world, have mercy on us." Before Holy God, man perceives himself to be sinful. The incident described by Luke the Evangelist (Luke 5:8),

where Simon Peter fell at Jesus' knees and said: "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" can serve as an example of this.

In the same manner as the Lutheran Mass, *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, performed after the Proskomide, begins with a prayer in which the kingdom of the Holy Trinity plays a central part: "Blessed be the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and from everlasting to everlasting." It is followed by the Great Ektenia, in which God's mercy is prayed for with respect to varying issues, among the first of which is the salvation of our souls. The priest's prayers of all the antiphons conclude with praise of the Triune God pertaining to various matters. In the priest's prayer of the Hymn of the Holy Trinity the sinfulness of man and in the hymn's song the holiness, strength and immortality of God are strongly present. Christ or The Holy Trinity and the sinfulness of man are emphasized elsewhere as well, such as, for example, in the priest's prayer after he blesses the deacon for the purpose of burning incense, in the Cherub Hymn and when incense is burned for the Sacred Offerings.

Biblical material, e.g. the Psalms, has a prominent position in the Divine Services of our churches. In the Mass of the Lutheran Church of Finland, Psalm 51 offers a means of expression to one confessing his sin: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." In Orthodox liturgy, the deacon, having taken the censer and placed incense in it, then proceeds to read the same Psalm in its entirety, while burning the incense.

When the issue under discussion concerns the prospects of man's will before the Holy Triune God, the basic premise is that man as sinner has sinned against God's holy will. Man's own will has turned against the will of God and he has sinned in thought and word. Because of his sin, man has earned himself eternal condemnation if God judges him according to His holiness and righteousness. Paradoxically, however, God wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4). This is decisive: through word and sacrament as through means the Holy Spirit is given to people and effects faith in those who hear the Gospel, where and when it pleases God. (CA V,2: see also Romans 10:17). In the following presentation I will examine this issue from the perspective of the prospects of man's will. I will begin with a point of view dealing with God's desire for the salvation of man.

The Triune God's desire for the salvation of man

In a lecture I gave in Moscow in 2002 I was able to observe, to my pleasure, that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed does more to unite us than it does to separate us. We confess our common faith in the Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the Creed we express our faith in the Father Pantocrator, the Maker of heaven and earth, all that is visible and invisible, and in Christ, Son of God, who is of one Being with the Father, and in the Holy Spirit, who gives life and reigns (Gk. *kýrios*). The perspective reaches from creation to history and to man and the world that is to come. Christ *came down from heaven*, *became incarnate*, *was born* into this world *as a man and rose from the dead for the sake of us men and our salvation*. The Triune God Himself did that which is not possible for man. Man had sinned and continues to sin against God's holy will, and for this God could condemn him to eternal damnation according to His holiness and righteousness. God, however, seeks to bring the sinner, subject to his judgment into communion with Him and wants to save him. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed a central role is played by *God's desire for the salvation of man*. Belief in the One God is, from the point of view of His purpose of salvation, belief in the Lord who is one with the same God, the *One* Lord, Jesus Christ. Otherwise the salvation of man would not be possible. What the Son of God has come to accomplish was and is unique; he is God's *only* (Gk. *monogenées*) Son, who has come to bring salvation to men. Jesus Christ is the *true* God, he is *born* of God, not created, since, were he part of creation, he could not have performed his mission of salvation. Furthermore, Jesus Christ is *born* (Gk. *gennaasthai*) of the Father – in fact begotten – before the beginning of time, an expression by means of which the Creed proclaims that man's salvation corresponds to God's original plan of salvation, which existed before the beginning of time. *The Triune God's desire and design for salvation*, *which existed before the beginning of time,* presupposes that all three, who nevertheless are one, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, act as a united *driving force in the matter of the salvation of man*. Otherwise the eternal God could not be fully present in the Son, nor could the Son made flesh communicate with the eternal God. Christ's incarnation from the Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary and his being born as a man are simply part of the manifestation, in accordance with the faith, of this plan of salvation, designed before the beginning of time and unfolding in the course of history. Thus God Himself brings about the realization of his plan of salvation concerning man. As Pantocrator he has at his disposal the power required. This is in part also expressed in the words of the first chapter of Ephesians: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for

adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will ... he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment – to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:3-14; see also Romans 8:28-30).

The Triune God's power of salvation also becomes apparent in the part of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed dealing with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reigns and gives life. The Holy Spirit, which spoke through the prophets, reigns continuously by means of the word and the sacraments. For the sake of our salvation, Christ came down from heaven and died, and for the sake of our salvation he was resurrected by the power of the Lord of Glory. Thus a baptism, in which we are baptized into the death of Christ and in which we rise from the dead together with Christ, that is, a baptism for the purpose of forgiving our sins, became possible (Romans 6:2-5). In our faith in the Holy Spirit, who reigns and gives life and in baptism acts powerfully to our salvation, we are at the same time made steadfast in order to await the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the ultimate victory of the Kingdom of Christ and life in the world that is to come.

In God's design and action for salvation, the fulfilment of God's will, as far as man is concerned, is a matter of prayer. Nothing can and nothing must be more important than this! How much in common we have even in this respect! As the *Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*, also the *Lord's Prayer* taught by our Lord is impressively present in both Mass and Liturgy. When Jesus taught people to pray, before commencing he said: "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." (Matthew 6:8; cf. Romans 8:26,34; Hebrews 7:25). In the prayer taught by Jesus, the holiness, name, kingdom and will – on earth as in heaven – of the Father are emphasized in contrast to the reality of man's own needs as well as his sin and evil. Before Holy God man can only pray for the realization of God's will and ask forgiveness for his sins.

As the Triune God carries out his plan and desire for man's salvation the initiative is in eternity and the power required comes from above as well.

In the following sub-chapters I will present, in the context of the background presented above, using a basic document explanatory of the biblical apostolic faith known as "The Book of Confessions of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church (Finnish edition 1990" as a basis, how the capabilities and prospects of man's free will should be evaluated from the point of view of the most important issue concerning man, salvation.

Rejecting active free will in the justification of an impious person

In David's Psalm 51, used in the confession of sins in our church, the confessing person is strongly conscious of the fact that he has sinned against God's will. In fact, he has a strong experience of having already been sinful at birth and that he had been begotten as subject to sin in his mother's womb (verses 6-7). The confessing person lives in a condition posterior to the Fall of Man. The reality of sin is an inexplicable thing, more accurately a hidden defect of man. Sin does not consist of externally perceived actions alone: it is a hidden truth, not a philosophical truth but a theological, secret truth, visible and audible only to the Holy Spirit. The Psalm describes sin as a total aspect of man. When man is subject to sin, he *is that as a whole*, not divided into soul and body, reason and senses, higher and lower spiritual capabilities or internal and external person and thus only sinful in part. It is a question of man's essence (nature) being corrupt through sin. When he confesses to having been sinful from birth, he expresses himself before Holy God according to the state he experiences, giving verbal form to not having followed God's will despite being aware of it. In the description of the Fall, the serpent's words to the woman: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" express doubt as to whether what God has said is really the truth. Belief and trust have been replaced by disparagement and questioning of as well as resistance to God's words. The root of sin is evident in unbelief.[10]

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10 *In primum librum Mose enarrationes* (1535-45), WA 42,64,31; *Enarratio Psalmorum LI...et CXXX* (1532), WA 40,II,322 et seqq, 327,17-22; *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X...damnatorum* (1521), WA 7,141,27; *Enarratio Psalmi XC* (1534-35), WA 40,III,552,21; *In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas commentarius* (1535), WA 40,II,111,2. See further: Bengt Hägglund, *De homine. Människouppfattningen i äldre luthersk teologi* [The Conception of Man in Earlier Lutheran Theology]. STL 18. Lund 1959,55-91,103-119; idem, *Arvet från reformationen. Teologihistoriska studier* [The Heritage of the Reformation Studies in the History of Theology]. Göteborg 2002,73-85.

How is belief, in which trust in the Triune God has been restored, engendered? How is man, enslaved by sin, made righteous before the Righteous and Holy God, that is, how is he saved? The view of the main confession of Lutheran churches, the Confession of Augsburg (1530), is that on the basis of the reconciliation brought about by Christ, God sends the Holy Spirit into the hearts of men, who guides them, comforts them, gives them life and defends them against the power of sin (*CA* III,1). God himself engenders a faith, on the basis of which they can believe that God makes them righteous. One who believes in Christ, is *saved without deeds*, by faith alone, receiving as a gift forgiveness of sins (*CA* VI,3). In faith he is wholly justified.

The Confessions of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland in many ways confirm what has been presented above. The *Small Catechism* (1529) says on the subject: "I believe that I cannot believe in my Lord Jesus Christ with the help of my own reason and power nor reach him, but that the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel..." (*SC* III,[6]). The *Large Catechism*, written in the same year, expresses the matter in the following way: "For neither you nor I could ever obtain any knowledge of Christ, nor could we believe in Him and have Him as our Lord, if the Holy Spirit did not provide this treasure by means of the preaching of the Gospel and place it into our bosom. The act of salvation is done, it has been accomplished. This treasure has been obtained for us by Christ, who earned it by his suffering, his death and his resurrection. But if this deed were to remain hidden, so that no-one could discover anything about it, it would remain futile and be in vain. God has given his Word to be preached publicly so that this treasure might not remain buried, but would be made use of and enjoyed. In His Word he has given the Holy Spirit to bring to us the treasure of redemption and make it ours. Thus, sanctification is merely about bringing one to Lord Christ to receive his good gifts. By ourselves, by our own strength, we could not hope to reach him." (*LC* II,38-39; see also Phil. 2:13; *SD* II,26).

In the *Augsburg Confession* it is taught of the justification of man that the Holy Spirit effects faith in those who hear the Gospel. In the article pertaining to repentance it is emphasized that faith is born of the Gospel, that is, of absolution (*CA* XII,5). The birth of faith under the influence of the Holy Spirit through hearing the Gospel precludes the idea of God making the sinful righteous because of the latter's own merit. (*CA* V,2-3). In the Confession, the concept of faith that makes one righteous is touched upon also by contrasting it with the role of good deeds in the spiritual life of the Christian. Faith that is to be compatible with justification "is to bear good fruit and … good deeds commanded by God are to be done because it is God's will, not because we should expect to earn justification

before God by means of these deeds. For justification and the forgiveness of sins are received through faith…" (*CA* VI,1; XII,6,10; see also XX, passim).

The Apostle Paul is convinced of salvation coming through faith: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). In accordance with the Lutheran view is that man cannot please God through good deeds or earn grace and forgiveness for his sins (CA XX,9). Since men must, however, do good deeds as commanded by God, God directs them through his Ten Commandments (*CA* XX,1-2). Although the detailed explanations of God's Ten Commandments found in the *Small* and *Large Catechism*, in the framework of the general perspective of the *Catechisms*, serve God's purpose of the salvation of man, they are of significance even in giving instructions for directing the good deeds. Faith, then, is not in an inverse relation to good deeds; on the contrary, being awakened by God, it brings about the rightful deeds commanded by Him. A good tree bears good fruit (Matthew 7:17-18; Luke 6:43-45; Galatians 5:6b; *CA* XII, 6; XX,31,35).

In the systematics of the Augsburg Confession, the question of man's free will or power of decision is discussed in article XVIII. Before this, the Triune God's activity aimed at making man righteous as well as the content of justification itself and its materialization pertaining to man have been treated. God is the creator, the Son of God is sent to men who are subject to sin. The office of the church is established for the purpose of teaching the Gospel and distributing the sacraments. The word and the sacraments (baptism, Eucharist, penitence/absolution) are tools, by means of which the Holy Spirit effects in people faith that is compatible with justification, that is, faith, according to which righteousness has been gifted to them for the sake of Christ. Horizontal matters pertaining to the activity of man in this world are explained only after the activity of God, directed at man and aiming at his justification.

The lack of original righteousness in the reality of sin

The delegations sent by our churches have stated together in the negotiations in Kiev 1995 (see also the negotiations in Turku 1980, third thesis of peace) that in the teaching of the apostle Paul (Romans 2:14-15) the law of God is inscribed in the hearts of all men, and that based on it they have an appreciation of good and evil. According to the first chapter of the first Book of Moses (Genesis 1:26-27) God made mankind in his image, in his likeness, while according to Ephesians

the new man has been created to be what God desires him to be, to live a holy life in righteousness and truth (Ephesians 4:24). The true condition of man after the Fall, however, is life in the reality of sin, characterized by unbelief and mistrust towards the Triune God, that is, by faith contrary to the Creed. Men are born in sin, that is, without fear of God, without faith in God and subject to an evil lust. Unless man is reborn by means of the power of the baptism and the Holy Spirit, he is condemned to eternal death (*CA* II,1–2). The *Augsburg Confession* takes seriously the condition of man after the Fall: "For without the Holy Spirit man's strength is full of ungodly emotions and too weak to accomplish the good deeds that are fit before God." Instead of crying out to God to help him, expecting help from God and bearing his cross with patience, man seeks the support of men and has confidence in it. When belief and faith in God are wanting, the heart of man is controlled by his own self-centered and selfish aspirations (*CA* XX,31,38).

The confession titled *The Schmalkald Articles*, completed in late 1536, describes the reality of man after the Fall, that is, what sin has brought about in man. The fruits of sin are evil deeds, forbidden by the Ten Commandments, namely unbelief, false belief, worship of false gods, lack of fear of God, arrogance, despair and spiritual blindness, that is, in short, ignorance of God and indifference towards Him. These are followed by lying, repeated [false] oaths in the name of God, neglecting prayer and supplication, contempt for the word of God, disobedience towards one's parents, murder, indecency, theft and fraud. What is in question is a corruption of nature so deep and malign that it is incomprehensible to reason and must be believed on the basis of biblical revelation (Genesis; Exodus 33; Psalms 51; Romans 5). Accordingly, man cannot fulfill or observe all of God's commandments through natural ability. Nor can man through his natural ability love God above all and his neighbor as himself. Nor can man have confidence in that, if he does his best, God will surely grant him His mercy. The concern is that Christ's merit and his grace should not be diminished in the least, lest his sacrifice prove vain.

Essentially the same conception of sin and its consequences is evident as well in the second article of the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, dealing with original sin. After Adam, men have no real fear of God, no faith in God, no true belief in God. Neither do they have any capability of engendering these. After the corruption of man's nature, the evil lust is not only deeds, but a continuous inclination of nature for evil (*Apology* II,2-3). Man has no original strength to love God above all and fulfill God's commandments in such a way that their most profound content would be realized. The greatest defects of man's nature are apparent in the fulfilling of the commandments of the first tablet of God's Ten

Commandments. The relevant condition of man is termed in the *Apology* a lack of original righteousness. While original righteousness prevailed, man's wisdom comprehended God and God was reflected in his righteousness. He was the image and likeness of God and of such quality as he had been created by God (Genesis 1:26-27). When sin is described as lack of original righteousness, the term sin is used to mean man's lack of certain knowledge of God and fear of God, or at least lack of sincere ability and strength to achieve these. (*Apology* II,14-23).

The Ten Commandments of the *Large Catechism* teach to those subject to sin what they must do. The commandments have been inscribed beforehand in the heart of man. Because of sin, he is unable to fulfill them. Faith or confession of faith in turn expresses what is done and given to him by God. It is impossible for human wisdom to comprehend faith, the teaching of which remains the province of the Holy Spirit alone (LC II,67-68; cf. also *SD* II,9, in which the passage concerning the contents of the law contains a reference to the first chapter of Romans). In the latest confession of *The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* titled Formula of Concord (containing *Epitome* and *Solida Declaratio*), dating from the year 1577, the question of man's free will is expressly thematized. The central question is: "What effect can the reason and will of man not yet reborn have in man's own conversion and rebirth through what of its own strength remains after the Fall?" On the basis of the *Augsburg Confession*, it is stated that man is corrupted by the Fall of Adam to such an extent that in matters of conversion and the salvation of the soul he is naturally blind. In divine matters, the reason, heart and free will of man not yet reborn cannot by means of its own inherent abilities comprehend, believe, receive, contemplate, want, begin, achieve, accomplish, affect or contribute anything. A slave to sin, man through his natural free will cannot in any way whatsoever contribute to or accomplish anything pertaining to his own conversion. As such, neither does he have the ability to assent to the grace and salvation offered by the Holy Spirit, unless the Spirit of God enlightens and controls him. Personal will and strength cannot contribute anything to this effect even in the life of the reborn: all is due to the Holy Spirit which has been given to man (*SD* II,5,7,18). The *Formula of Concord* vigorously rejects the prospects of man's free will in the matter of conversion and salvation.

The "ability" of man's passive will in conversion

In the Lutheran way of thinking, the freedom and commitment of man's will depend on their context, either divine or human, considering the original condition of man, his state after the Fall, the activity of the Holy Spirit in the matter of his conversion and his activity after conversion. A natural man cannot by means of

his free will actively contribute anything to his conversion, that is, he lacks the active ability to do so (*Ep.* II,2). When the Holy Spirit graciously and powerfully affects man in his conversion, it turns and releases man's will towards the true freedom it was originally created for. Thus man's will does not disappear, but in the context of conversion it remains a passive ability, without any independent and contributing significance. Conversion and the belief in Christ associated with it take place from beginning to end due to the grace of God and through the influence of the Holy Spirit (*Apology* XVIII,6-8; *SD* II,22-23, the Latin text, and 26,45,69). From the preaching of the law, man learns to know his sin, whereupon he is terrified before Holy God and repents. Upon hearing the Holy Gospel, the spark of faith is kindled in him. The Holy Spirit, which is given to the heart of man, brings about his receiving absolution from sin for the sake of Christ and finding comfort in the promise of the Gospel (*Apology* XII,passim; *SD* II,54). The Holy Spirit effects everything in man's reason, will and heart so that man does not accomplish or perform anything, being instead simply the object of action (*SD* II,83,89). Before man's conversion only two influencing causes exist, the Holy Spirit and the word of God. Man cannot of his own strength receive the word in faith, only through the influence of God, the Holy Spirit. The passive behavior of man's will in conversion refers to new emotion brought about by God's grace, that is, to what the Spirit of God by means of the word or the sacraments does, when it seizes man's will and effects in it rebirth and conversion.[11] When the Holy Spirit through its divine power and influence has reshaped and renewed the will of man, man's new will as tool of the Holy Spirit contributes to the following actions taken by the Holy Spirit. God has made reluctant and indifferent men willing and their reborn will contributes to the deeds performed through them and others by the Holy Spirit (*Ep.* II, 17-18; *SD* II,65-66).

In true conversion a change is wrought: comprehension, will and heart are sensitized to a new mode of action. Man's heart learns to know and receive the promise of God's grace in Christ. Man begins to struggle against flesh. If nothing happens, the conversion cannot be true. Man's natural abilities, however, cannot

11 *The Formula of Concord* (Ep. II, 2-6 and SD II,7-26) contains references to the following Biblical passages: Genesis 8:21; Deuteronomy 29:3; Deuteronomy 30:6; Psalms 51:12; Psalms 91; Psalms 73:22 (the brute beast); Jeremiah 5:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Ezekiel 11:19;36:26; Hosea 6:5 (I killed you with the words of my mouth — then my judgments go forth like the sun); Matthew 11:27; 13:13,15; Luke 24:45; John 1:5 (darkness); John 6:29,44; John 8:34,37; John 15:5; Acts 5:31; 16:14b; Acts 26:18 (darkness); Romans 1:16; Romans 3:11-12; Romans 7:14,18,23; Romans 8:7; Romans 9:16; Romans 10:17; 1. Corinthians 1:21; 1. Corinthians 2:14; 1. Corinthians 3:7; 1. Corinthians 4:7; 1. Corinthians 12:3; 2. Corinthians 3:5-6; 2. Corinthians 5:17 (the new creation); Galatians 5:17; Galatians 6:15 (the new creation); Ephesians 1:17-18; 2:1-2,5,10; Ephesians 4:17-18; Ephesians 5:8 (darkness); Philippians 2:13; Colossians 2:13; 2. Timothy 2:25-26; Titus 3:5; James 1:17).

contribute to the conversion, only the Holy Spirit. Everything is a gift from and due to the influence of the Holy Spirit (*Smalcald* III,2-3; *Ep.* II,4-6; *SD* II,70-71). When man has been converted and illuminated and his will recreated, he will use the powers implanted in him in conversion by the Holy Spirit to do as much good and as long as the Holy Spirit controls, directs and guides him. The reborn possesses a will that has been freed by God (*SD* II,65-67).

The prospects of the free will of a man of corrupt nature from the perspective of morality

According to the *Augsburg Confession,* the concept of free power of decision includes the notion that human will has a certain freedom to maintain social righteousness and make choices in matters subject to reason. Free will extends only to the sphere of worldly life, not into that which is significant from the perspective of man's relationship with God, in other words, that which engenders God's righteousness. It serves a natural good, that which is in accordance with God's purpose of creation, such as e.g. marriage, agriculture and animal husbandry, the construction of buildings and the development of various skills, or else it practices, due to sin, deeds contrary to God's will (*CA* XVIII; cf. also XVI).

In the *Apology*, social righteousness is said to be controlled by reason and "to some extent" by man's own power (*Apology* II,12). Men comprehend the law – the Ten Commandments – "to a certain extent" through their reason, that is, naturally, because God has inscribed a common sense of justice in their hearts. The law demands external social deeds and accomplishments, which man is "somewhat" capable of by using his reason. The Ten Commandments in fact demand much more of him, including things reason is not capable of, namely true fear of God, true love of God and true supplication of God, that is, fulfillment of the demands of the first tablet of the Law. Nor can reason maintain even social order or righteousness save "to some extent". Due to the weakness of human nature and the fact that the Devil goads it on to obvious vices, reason is often unable to hold its own. Nevertheless, there is nothing greater in the corrupt nature than the righteousness of reason. For it corresponds to laws, civilization, learning, authority and punishments (*Apology* IV,6-8,22-24; see also *CA* XVI and *Apology* XVI; XVIII, 7; *SD* II,26,31).

The Lutheran confession, then, does not deprive man's will of the freedom of choice – on the contrary, it underlines it – as long as its freedom of choice concerns those matters, which reason is capable of comprehending and dealing with. Man can, for example, respect authority and his parents "to some extent"

and be just. It is also possible for man's reason-based will to talk about God and by means of external acts carry out a kind of service to God. Through selectiveness in external acts, it can also abstain from trespassing the Fifth[12], the Sixth, the Seventh (the Sixth, the Seventh and the Eighth in Orthodox reckoning) and other Commandments of the second tablet. What remains in man's nature after the Fall are reason, judgment and the ability to choose in matters perceptible to the senses. Man has the freedom and the ability to implement social righteousness. During the course of this life, man is permitted to make use of the arts of medicine and building as well as food, drink and air. The Gospel does not abolish social or economic order – on the contrary, it accepts them and commands obedience to them as part of divine order, even if they are institutions of non-Christian people. However, the Lutheran attitude to these questions is realistic. The power of the evil lust is so great that men more often follow their wicked desires than correct judgment. In addition, the Devil influences the ungodly and instigates them to carry out various transgressions. As a consequence even social righteousness is rare among men (*Apology* XVI,2,5; XVIII,4-6; XIX).

The *Small* and *Large Catechisms* that explain the apostolic faith of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland contain a great deal of material explaining the central contents of the Christian faith, intended for clergymen, preachers and in general to Christians living among a fallen mankind. This teaching was necessary, since knowledge of the Christian faith was nonexistent in the parishes and even many clergymen were incapable of teaching it. The most important things to be taught were God's Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Comprehension of these was necessary before partaking in the Eucharist. After this the Catechisms explain – partly in a different order – teaching pertaining to baptism, confession and the Sacrament of the Altar and give certain instructions, intended for fathers of families, concerning the teaching of the Christian way of life.

In the opening words of the *Little Catechism*, teachers are reminded that they must guide the people to know what is considered right and wrong by those among whom they desire to live and earn their living. A person seeking to settle in a town must know the laws of that place, acknowledge its authorities, and obey them regardless of whether he truly believes or is deep inside a wicked man and a scoundrel (*LC*, introduction 13). Special emphasis must be placed on those of God's commands concerning which the people being taught are most in need of

12 The Catholic Church and the Lutheran Churches in numbering the Commandments deviate from the numbering used by the Orthodox, Reformed and Anglican Churches by not considering the prohibition of images an independent Second Commandment and not treating the Ninth and Tenth Commandments as a single Commandment.

instruction. Certain professional groups must be made thoroughly familiar with the Seventh Commandment, prohibiting stealing, whereas children and ordinary people should be instructed in the Fourth. Authorities and parents, for their part, are to be exhorted to bring the children to school, so that they might learn to live quietly, loyally, obediently and humbly for the purpose of maintaining peaceful social order (*LC*, introduction 18).

What has been said above indicates that the *Catechisms* presuppose a free will on the part of man in external compliance with most of the Commandments. Regulating the mutual coexistence of people they must, then, be understood as expressions of a morality capable of being realized. Since man's nature is corrupt, through his free will he is capable of complying with them only to a certain extent or somehow. The three first Commandments (the First, the Third and the Fourth in Orthodox reckoning) are not – with the exception of the swearing of oaths belonging to the sphere of the Second Commandment (the Third in Orthodox reckoning) – within the prospects of free will. They can only be realized on the basis of faith engendered by the Holy Spirit.

In the explanation of the third article of the Creed in the *Large Catechism*, the Triune God's activity pertaining to men and the world becomes apparent from the way in which God's purpose is depicted. According to the *Catechism*, God has created men for the purpose of redemption and sanctification. The reality of sin is predicted in God's plan of salvation. God has created the world and men in order to be able to redeem and sanctify. The Ten Commandments, the faith or the Creed and the Lord's Prayer are expressions of the will of the Triune God as he guides this world and its people towards the world that is to come and its life. What is said in the *Catechism* regarding the Ten Commandments, faith and the Lord's Prayer is ultimately tied to God's plan of salvation. Any moral activity done to help one's neighbors – regardless of whether it is based on the prospects of the free will of man's corrupt nature or those of the will of justified man, freed by faith – ultimately also reflects God's purpose of creation and salvation, his plan of salvation pertaining to all.

In the explanations of the Commandments given in the *Large Catechism*, it is repeatedly demonstrated that external – based on free will – fulfillment of the Commandments is not sufficient for their radical fulfillment. As an example we can consider the explanation of the Fifth (the Sixth in Orthodox reckoning) Commandment, in which it is emphasized that no-one must be harmed because of an act of mischief committed. Furthermore, no-one must be injured by physical action nor must one verbally urge or counsel others to do so. Nor must any procedure that injures another person be tolerated. The Fifth Commandment,

then, is capable of being fulfilled morally through free will, even if sin often prevents this from happening. When we turn to the radical fulfillment of the Fifth Commandment, it is a different matter. No man exists who could comply with that Commandment in the absolute manner required by God, that is, by actively and comprehensively working to protect his neighbors, do them good in every respect, rescue them from all suffering and injury and predict and prevent external and internal threats to them. In fact one is justified in asking whether men would be capable of accomplishing even a single deed compatible with a radical fulfillment of the Commandment (*LC* I,182,188,191,193,333; II,2,68). Unconditional or radical fulfillment of any of the other Commandments of the second tablet thus surpasses morality and cannot belong to a category comprising the moral acts and functions of free will. Their radical fulfillment is only possible though the grace of God and faith in Him.

The prospects of the will of justified man from the perspective of morality

The three first parts of the *Small* and *Large Catechisms* – the law of God, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer are ultimately a means of expressing the activity of the Triune God for the purpose of accomplishing His plan for the salvation of man. Viewed from this perspective, morality is a secondary issue. Since it is God's desire that all men be saved, morality and the manner in which men serve one another is meaningful in the sense that God's activity that guides and sustains men is a precondition for man being able to hear the Gospel and enjoy the sacraments, the instruments of salvation. However, the individual cannot be saved simply by performing moral acts through his free will.

Since man is unable to fulfill the Ten Commandments through his free will, learning pertaining to them does not make anyone Christian (*LC* II, 68). Since man's free will is often weak, due to sin, even in matters that lie within its reach, even morally acceptable deeds are not always realized.

Man, as a sinner living in the reality of sin, has sinned and continues to sin against the First Commandment. He has not had and does not have faith and belief in the Triune God from the bottom of his heart. Transgression of the First Commandment results in man being unable to uphold the other Commandments in the radical manner required by God and even morally only to a certain extent. It is only when the Holy Spirit is gifted to men through the preaching of law and Gospel and the distribution of the Sacraments and when faith is engendered in them that

man begins to love all of God's Commandments through all his heart. The Triune God gives to man Himself and all his power in order to support and help him in fulfilling the Ten Commandments (*LC* II,1-4,13-15, 68-69; III,2-3; see also *Apology* IV,125,270). Man, in turn, directs to God a prayer for a permanent and increasing faith (*SD* II,14) and for the strength to uphold the Ten Commandments. The Creed expresses the contents of the faith and the Lord's Prayer gives the words necessary for prayer (*LC* III,2-3). If man could somehow uphold the Ten Commandments on his own, in the manner required, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer would not be required at all (*LC* II,3). It is faith alone that makes man pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6; *LC* II,68; *Apology* IV,269).

When the Triune God has justified man by granting him faith and sent the Holy Spirit into his heart, man's will is also recreated and has turned away from his own self. Rejoicing in his heart, he accepts the law of God (Romans 7:21). Thereafter man does voluntarily as much good and as long as the Spirit of God makes him. His will is in accordance with God's plan of salvation, *tied* in its relationship to God, but freed and strengthened to support and help his neighbor, the object of God's salvation. The free will of one living in the reality of sin and *tied* to its works acts, too, even if the person is unaware of it, in accordance with God's will and plan of salvation, when it morally, in an external way or somehow, implements God's Commandments for the good of the neighbors (*SD* II,63-65). However, it is only when justified that man gains from his faith, born of the proclamation of the Gospel, a special motive and strength to carry out what is to some extent at least morally possible to his free will, living in the reality of sin, in implementing God's Commandments (Philippians 2:12-13).

Summary

When the issue under discussion concerns the prospects of man's will before the Holy Triune God, the starting point is that man as a sinner has sinned against God's holy will. God, however, desires the salvation of all men. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, God's desire for man's salvation is expressed by on the one hand emphasizing that the Son, who is of one Being with the Father, is born of the Father before the beginning of time and that the only initiative in the matter of man's salvation is thus that of God; on the other hand, by emphasizing that Christ came down from heaven and became flesh for the sake of us men and our salvation. Through the word and the sacraments, the Holy Spirit effects in man a faith that justifies him (saves him), that is, faith in that God makes man righteous for the sake of Christ. The salvation of man corresponds to the Triune God's original plan for salvation, existing before the beginning of time, in the realization of which the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in common act as the

driving force, with man bending to the will of God. The grace of God engenders new emotion in man. Man cannot through his free will contribute actively in any way to his conversion. Salvation, originating in God, is a gift given to man. In the baptism for the forgiveness of sins, men are baptized into the death of Christ and in it they rise from the dead together with Christ.

When justified, man gains from his faith, born of the proclamation of the Gospel, a special motive and strength to carry out what is to some extent at least morally possible to his free will, living in the reality of sin, in upholding God's Commandments. Thus the Lutheran confession does not deprive the will of man of its freedom. However, in striving in this world he has freedom of choice only in matters which reason is capable of comprehending and dealing with, that is, in the organization and realization of social matters and in external things. Faith appears as love. The sinful man, however, is deficient even in external things and thus in need of penitence. By means of the Law and the Gospel, God engenders in reluctant people the desire to act according to his good purpose and makes them follow that course of action.

According to our faith, Christ will return to judge the living and the dead. At the Judgment all merit belongs to the Triune God and Christ. Appealing to anything else would diminish the merit of Christ.

MAN – IMAGE OF GOD OR SLAVE TO LUST? (A DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND SECULAR PSYCHOLOGY)

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In the history of science, for the past 150 years, psychology has developed along atheist lines. Naturally there are believers among psychologists as well, but for the most part the direction taken by psychology has been an atheist one. For this reason, the stance assumed in academic circles towards Christian psychology has been inconsistent and not always very positive. Christian psychologists are obliged to demonstrate before the scientific community that they are entitled to use a Christian view of human nature in psychology.

It must also be confessed that psychology is viewed critically in Christian circles. Few theologians understand the importance of the discipline in question and that psychology does not compete with asceticism, anthropology or the duties of the shepherd. For example, one seasoned pastor expressed the opinion that where experienced care of souls is available psychology is unnecessary.

The dialogue, then, is mutually exclusive by nature. It is all the more clear that church and society should engage in dialogue and seek communion. However, the issue is not any abstract concept, but the human being. Man, who himself is more valuable than anything else, makes the dialogue of Christian and secular psychology extremely tense and challenging.

Regardless of how Christian psychology develops in the future, it is important to understand what separates psychology and theology and what is the unifying knowledge that may provide a common basis and has recently been called the humanistic paradigm of psychology.

The two most important views of the human being are that of the natural sciences and the Christian, humanistic one; they determine the amount of humanity in man.

It is important that we first comment on the soul as well as spiritual life and the psyche. What is meant by Christian anthropology is the branch of theology studying the essence and nature of the human being as well as the soul. Psychology, on the other hand, leaning on anthropology, studies phenomena and events, that is, the phenomenology of the soul. In this sense, Christian psychology, just like scientific psychology, studies processes occurring in the soul. While scientific psychology discusses processes or the psyche, Christian psychology is concerned first and foremost with the functioning of the soul. There is an ontology of concepts between anthropology and psychology: anthropology studies the soul and its manifestation, whereas psychology is concerned with the manifestation of the soul as well as spiritual life and the coming to being of the internal objects of spiritual life. Psychology studies first and foremost the inner life of the human being, born as a result of the action of reason, heart, conscience, consciousness and person. Whereas anthropology simply observes the ontological and ascetic conception of the structure of consciousness, heart, reason and person, psychology studies in a concrete way their formation and the changes occurring in them. First of all, Christian psychology is able to study the process that can be termed growth, change and life of the soul, that is, precisely the processes that belong to the sphere of psychology.

Christian psychology studies, or at least it should study, processes occurring alongside universal human processes as well as good deeds – that is, phenomena related to grace and inner illumination. Naturally, Christian psychology also studies the religious life of the soul.

The Christian faith points to the moral and spiritual state of reason, heart, conscience and consciousness. Scientific psychology was from the beginning concerned with the formation and existence of these phenomena, without attributing to them any moral or spiritual connotations. It is precisely at this point that scientific psychology differs essentially from Christian psychology, which is a form of science as well, even though its basis is Christian.

Christian psychology and scientific psychology are in no way opposed to one another. It is a question of different approaches being utilized by different disciplines. Christian psychology is just as scientific, scientific-theological.

In what follows, we shall consider the fundamental differences in the view of the human being that is characteristic of Orthodox psychology.

The first of these differences concerns perceptions of man's true essence. Scientific psychology usually studies the human being as he is at the moment

the experiment or examination is carried out or in some other temporally bound situation. According to scientific psychology, man is a creature that has come into being as a result of biological, historical and cultural evolutionary processes. Scientific psychology does not study the ideal man known from Biblical history or the eschatological future. What I mean is that, in Christianity, the first man, Adam, and the resurrected man existing after the Second Coming of Christ are a theological reality, bringing into the scope of theology human characteristics not possessed by the men of the present, who are subject to sin.

According to Christian anthropology, the first man was quite different from modern man. Prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve possessed many abilities which modern humans are either lacking or occur in weaker form. In this sense, the concept "slave to lust", used in the title of my presentation, denotes a quality that is sinful and historical, but not ontological.

How, then, can we connect Christian psychology's view of the real human being to the corresponding anthropological ideal? Christian psychology strives to discover in man the original spiritual life on the basis of which a new life can be built. The new one, in turn, enables the sanctification and change of the human soul and person. According to Christian psychology there is an unshakable foundation in man's essence, one which may have originated in the ancient past, but is present in every human being and may act as a basis for any type of change of the soul. In scientific psychology, the existence of such a concept is an impossibility, since there is no comprehension of the soul's essence, let alone its qualities. An important research topic in Christian psychology is how to locate that foundation, onto which the soul's new life can be built, in the human soul. This foundation is the image of God, by which we mean those qualities, ontologically present in the human soul, which as a result of sin have been distorted, battered and bloodied.

Christian psychology, then, is a theological discipline which nonetheless also has a command of scientific psychology. The task is a difficult one, sometimes even an impossible one. For this reason, the future depends on the development of Christian psychology itself. An important role is played in this by the results and theoretical and experimental observations of both basic and applied research. The nucleus of Christian psychology is in the anthropology of the Fathers of the Church, which proved to be more advanced. Orthodox psychology must be distinct from other approaches to psychology first and foremost in comprehending man as a divine person, in whom the reality of sin conceals the divine essence. "True" always denotes the real human being, the person, the concrete individual.

According to Christian psychology, no man, no matter how sinful, has lost this divine spark. The mission of psychology is to uncover this spark in each individual and to direct him to change. Every human being is an image of God, not a product of complexes, phobias or unconscious aspirations.

Christian psychology views man as an "open system". The difference between this and scientific psychology is that openness is principally receptivity to God. In scientific psychology man is open to the human community, and it is precisely the community's influence that guides him to a civilized personal life. Christian psychology accepts this, but sees man as spiritually receptive. This means that man must be receptive to God, from whom he receives knowledge, strength, faith and grace.

The human being is a spiritually open system, or, as is customarily said in accordance with the terminology of the Gospel, a vessel, which may be open to God's grace. The grace of God, in turn, may come to man or it may not. Man can accept grace, but he can also refuse it. Grace is something free – God gifts the Holy Spirit to man according to his own will. Man is even free to refuse the grace of God.

The openness described above is also a particular challenge to psychology. How can we ensure that man is always open to God? The task is not easy, for we often encounter people who are out of reach of God's grace, closed, having focused their aspirations elsewhere or concentrated entirely on themselves. One practical mission of Christian psychology is to teach people to be open and to wait for God's grace and to be able to receive something new.

As a final matter touching upon the topic of God's grace, I wish to point out that it manifests itself as a force capable of sanctifying all the powers of the human soul, bringing man to his true essence and state of being and giving him a new ability, one truly powerful and not experienced before. God's grace has the power to change man's soul to a great extent. It is this power that the Christian psychological way of treating afflictions of the psyche is based upon, without forgetting scientific methods.

We Christian psychologists are of the opinion that the human soul contains the power and the ability to heal, even though it is enslaved by sin and oppressed by lusts. But God, who has created man and brought him salvation, bestows on him his renewing grace, in which the powers and psychic functions of the soul are given new life.

Another difference between Christian and scientific psychology is the concept of sin. Scientific psychology does not know such a concept. Previously it was considered by scientific psychology to belong to the sphere of social norms, that is, general morality. Orthodox psychology understands sin in a completely different way.

Sin is not an ontological reality, it is the manifestation of evil. Evil has no substance; all there is are acts by a free creature. In psychology sin is viewed as a kind of trace of action, a consequence, a stamp or label within man's soul. It can also be considered habituation or acquired practice in a certain kind of action.

On the other hand, therefore, in Christian psychology the reality of sin is seen as a certain trace, a change in the substance of man's soul, and on the other as habitual behavior. How, then, can we help man by means of Christian psychology, first of all to comprehend the changed state of their soul, which can be termed sin or vice? And how can we assist him in conquering his sinful habits and practices and arm him against sin? To sum up, above we have presented some of the conceptions separating Christian from scientific psychology.

If the Christian psychologist examines the human soul as a personal-social system of some kind, he does not in any way differ from the practitioners of scientific psychology. It is of importance to us that humanistic science should always study man as a system receptive to God's grace, guided by his person, when man, as we are in the habit of saying, walks the spiritual path, that is, is spiritually attuned and adjusts his own actions to the right direction. Most of all, the psychologist should be distinguished from the psychotherapist.

Lusts

What exactly is lust? We will answer this question on the basis of the experience provided by the dogmatic view of man. First of all, we are interested in the ontology of lust and the question of how lust came to reside in man. One of the central tenets of Orthodox teaching is that man has been created free of lusts and out of their reach. However, Gnosticism often refers to lust having resided in man from the beginning. Origen presents the view that the human soul is that of a fallen angel, who as a consequence of his sins has been forced to assume the role of a human soul. Thus, the new human soul is a fallen angel's soul, and since he is fallen, he is already sinful. According to Origen, this is the reason man is lustful.

Most Orthodox Church Fathers disagreed with Origen. According to them, man was created free of lust. Man's nature was originally pure. "Lust is a state of the basic nature", wrote Gregory of Nyssa. A state, then, but not nature. "The nature of man is free of lust".

Macarius the Egyptian writes: "Some hidden foulness and darkness of lust has come upon all men as a consequence of Adam's crime, against the purity of man's nature." Two conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly, man was created free of lust, there was no lust in him. Because of this, lust is not to be sought in the original – or healthy, as we would express it – nature of man. Were we able to discover the original, pure nature of man, we would not find any lust in it. Secondly, lust was obtained by man, and since it is something obtained, it is a consequence of man's activity, that is, of the original sin. The original sin is the beginning of lust. According to Macarius the Egyptian it was as a result of the crime of Adam that the vile darkness of lust came into the nature of man. How did this happen? We have already stated that lust is a consequence of the original sin, and has become a permanent state of man's nature, his body and soul. However, when speaking of lust, we do not mean only these permanent qualities. As a consequence of an extended period of man's having been subjected to lusts and acting in accordance with them, something else has made its way into the human soul. It is not merely a state, but lust becoming a part of his soul. The Church Fathers often spoke of the "lustful part of the soul", although no such thing originally existed. This lustful part of the soul is located in the vexatious or desirable parts (Nemesius of Emesa). Some, such as Macarius the Egyptian and Abba Dorotheus assign it to the heart, for according to them "the heart is a den of lusts". Many, the apostle Paul among them, speak of the lusts of the flesh. We must keep in mind that lust is a reformation. Firstly, lust was not part of the qualities of the first man and secondly, it was not given to man as a punishment, but for the purposes of inner education. There is no question of the seeds of lust having been planted by someone. Only thoughts and temptations come from the Devil, not lust itself.

According to Gnostic teaching, lusts are spirits of a sort. Even today Orthodox people sometimes say that lusts originate from evil and are not their own. In truth, man is himself guilty for the appearance of lusts. Pozov has written on the subject. He clearly demonstrates that lusts are formed in their entirety in the soil composed of the spiritual and bodily qualities of man.

Clement of Alexandria writes: "It is criminal to assume that lusts are spirits which enter a person and begin to act in him." Many modern day Orthodox are inclined to personify human lusts and blame the Devil for everything. This is a sign of

the kind of unhealthy spirituality in which man attempts to elevate himself. Whether it happens during confession or in other discussion, all elevation is evil. Not everything is of the Devil. The majority of man's sins originate in his inner stimuli. This is, in fact, man's hope. If everything were of the Devil, he should be evaded by means of the use of holy water, the cross and prayer. Although everything seems simple, it is in fact complex, for no change for the better will happen in man himself if there is no attempt to effect such change. If, on the other hand, one understands that the root of sin is in man himself, it becomes obvious that man can and must change, be healed and receive treatment. Since much is in man's own hands, there is hope aplenty as well. Lusts are not spirits, but a reshaping of the soul.

We have reached a new question: where do lusts come from? I do not mean their coming into being in the ontological, but the psychological sense. It is obvious that in the case of the first man, the appearance of lust was an event of an historical nature. We all have personal experiences of the birth of lusts. But we never possessed the pure, original human nature to begin with. This means that in our nature, lust is inborn. Can we say the newborn child has no lust? Yes, we can, but when the child grows, lust does appear in it. This is so, first of all, because children do not grow up in a social vacuum, but in a concrete cultural and psychological environment. The child grows up among his family. A significant part of human lusts are due to upbringing, or rather it is upbringing that causes their prerequisites to be fulfilled. For example, people might say that food is appreciated in their family, and because of this, everything must be good and varied. Thus the child may develop the precondition for this concrete lust related to eating. Similarly, the reaction might be the exact opposite, and this, too, is ultimately a lust. The latter development, however, is in some way rather salutary, save for some extreme conditions. Not rarely does the Lord make man's lusts the tools of his salvation, but man uses them to his own detriment. Lusts often lead people from one extreme to the other. This is because human nature, inherited by the child from his parents, is damaged. The damage is initially observable in the child not as lust, but rather as qualities of his body and soul. The soul also possesses a unique, individual nature.

The manner in which this nature helps or hinders the development of the psychological qualities of the human soul also determines whether lusts develop or whether their development is inhibited. In other words, man inherits an inclination to certain types of lust. As an example, let us consider bodily characteristics. Some people have a tendency to react strongly, others weakly. It is a question of hereditary differences in neural reactions. Temperament is inherited, as are bodily characteristics, and certain personality traits can intensify inside a family.

Apart from hereditary traits and upbringing, everyone lives his or her life and everyone has his or her besetting sins – sins one might as well have avoided committing, but which one nevertheless committed consciously. This begins already in childhood. Our habit of viewing children as innocent babes is based only on reasoning. According to Orthodox dogma, there is no child free of sin. The fact that children do not confess their sins before they become seven years old is not due to them not being sinful, but because they do not know how to confess their sins. Sinful deeds appear in the child's life already in the first months of his life. Another question is, whether they become sin in him or not. We are not judges, it is God who judges all. But even a child is capable of deeds that injure his soul, erode his psyche and change it in a pathological way. Lusts take shape already in the first months of the child's life.

According to many, lust is first and foremost an illness of will. For the most part it is so, for everything that actively occurs in the soul, is due to the power of the person's will. Will is the motor of all powers of the soul, be they harmful, desirable, reason-based or other. Will plays a necessary role in each and every one of them. It cannot be otherwise.

S. M. Zarin writes: "Lust always indicates an inharmonious and bound state of a person's powers, in which his objective worth is degraded." Will is bound, dissipated and enervated. In the Gospel the "paralyzed man" is often mentioned. Paralysis is not always physical in nature. In our time, spiritual paralysis is more common. It is said that man's will is paralyzed or that he is two-faced. In both cases it is a question of afflictions of the will. A man controlled to lowly lusts of the flesh is able, through willpower, to prevent himself from being conquered by them. The sick man cannot. He might offer an explanation that "a rage simply took me over, I could not do anything". The spiritually weak-willed person presents the matter in such an eloquent manner. He might be able to demonstrate physical will, in sport, for example. But he is unable to conquer himself.

S. M. Zarin continues: "Lust is above all an illness of will, although other abilities are then also corrupted and have received a backward form. But primarily lust is an issue of will." Will is really the key to the entire soul. If the soul and the will go in separate directions, man can overcome lust. A person who controls his will is known by his ability to resist both spiritual and psychological lust. He can overcome the lust of flesh by his willpower. He can overcome everything low. But a strong will is also a good basis for self-sufficiency, self-love and the self to grow in, and they in turn can lead to pride and spiritual self-sufficiency. A strong-willed person therefore has his own difficulties.

Saint Theophan the Recluse also writes: “Lusts are the bad feelings of the will.” He stresses that some lusts are manifestations of a sickly and misdirected will.

Lust as sickness can appear in any part of the soul and it can be caught from any kind of feeling. Man can change anything into lust. “Do not change into lust the protection from lust.” It is therefore possible to fight against lust so strongly that the fight itself becomes lust. The fight must happen inside oneself where many things are wrong. What is a clean soul like? It is the psyche that the Holy Fathers have searched for. It means inner peace and harmony where all the powers of the soul are concentrated on one point. The road to this state is by extinguishing lust. The Church Fathers have written about this. It is this route that the Church Fathers took to achieve spiritual perfection. There is no other route. If man, who has not completely extinguished his lust, begins to do spiritual work, his lust will inevitably get tangled in his soul’s main function; it will live there and will contaminate it. This state of the psyche can only be achieved by the Holy Fathers, the ones who contend, because a special state of life required where many natural and spiritual impulses need to submit to reason. The examples of the Holy Fathers show us what the first man was like and how a fixed person can be.

Although man might not be able to conquer all lusts he should be aware of them. In a psychological sense this is very important. If you cannot free yourself from eating delicacies, binge eating or lasciviousness you should at least know what haunts you. Lust is clever and can take new and unidentified forms. Man accepts the new thought though only when he studies it within himself and finds out the true motives that lust has given rise to. That is why mankind must constantly control his impulses.

It is natural that lust changes some functions of the soul. Lust changes understanding. In the field of feelings and values, lust changes true feelings and values. Instead of true feelings man is ruled by lustfulness.

Lust is a reshaping of the soul, in which the natural, healthy structure of the soul is changed.

As we know, in addition to the definitions listed above, the Church Fathers used many symbolic definitions in literature. For example “lust is a cruel beast” that eats the soul or “lust is an evil spirit” that resides in the soul. There are other corresponding definitions, too. These definitions suit the real feelings that contenders felt when fighting against lust in accordance with spiritual reality.

Lust can also change and bind other psychological powers. Of course it is important to understand that lust is not the only sickness of the soul. There are many illnesses. There are illnesses of memory and of the senses, mental retardation and pathological oblovomism. But ever since antiquity lust has been talked about as the most important sickness of the soul connected to the breaking down of personality.

How is one to fight against lust? The main function of asceticism is to fight against lust. Anthropology wonders why man fights against lust. Everything – reason, will and heart – are tainted by lust. Lust drives people to false feelings, thoughts and impressions as well as mendacious and covetous acts.

Evagrius of Pontus, a 5th century ascetic, writes: ”Do not make protection from lust into lustfulness.” What *is* protection from lust? It is a mechanism fed by God and the angels but man can even turn that into lust. Man can change protection from lust into lustfulness and drown in it. Everything that happens in the soul can change to lust. Even belief in God can be lustfulness if it is fanaticism and self-importance. Lustfulness can even appear in valuable spiritual things. All sorts of self-sufficiency are mentioned in connection with asceticism. The contenders and the saints were caught up in spiritual snares that spiritual self-sufficiency had planted. Then valuable spiritual experiences became lustfulness.

Pride is one of the worst and most dangerous of spiritual lusts. I do not mean merely pride of life. Originally Adam’s sin was the pride of intoxication, proud belief in one’s own ability to control. Autocracy is present in human nature, it is put there by the Creator. Autocracy, however, should not contain any type of self-love. It should not be a source of pleasure, then it will not be lust or lasciviousness. Pride is the intoxication of autocracy.

According to those who strive, it is most important to fight against one’s thoughts. Lust will not gain power if one banishes thought. Thus it is good. But what should we do with those lusts that have already gained a place in the soul? One of the main rules of asceticism is that the man himself must recognize his own lust. He must see it. No one can point it out to him. Someone else can point to his sins and evil deeds. But the person himself must find out why he has committed certain sins or deeds and he might need to talk with a confessor.

Man’s self-knowledge is the most important arena in the fight against such lusts that appear as sin, deeds and thoughts. The Holy Fathers named the internal analysis the accounting of *pneumatikos* and *psychikos*. It is the first condition for

successful asceticism and is necessary in the early stages. As long as man cannot see all his lusts, he cannot win them.

Searching one's self is not without its dangers. But somehow lusts and the unconscious states of mind must be brought out. Saint John Climacus and Maximus the Confessor and many other ascetics have talked about the importance of searching one's self. They are an example of how lust can be revealed. Maximus the Confessor wrote: "Many lusts are hidden in our soul. They will be revealed when things that reveal them are pointed to. In the absence of revealing things one does not need to fight against lust. If then lust revealing things do appear, lust immediately obscures reason."

In examining one's own lusts one should first analyze one's life experience. The Lord guides us in such a way that we learn something new about ourselves every day. The most important thing is to be unafraid of one's self and to be open because one has to make unpleasant confessions to one's self. Learning to know one's inner self is very painful because so much evil can be found there. It requires bravery and psychological balance. If the human soul is unstable or weak, seeking out one's sins can be dangerous. The shepherd must sometimes stop him from striving and suggest that he not hurry, but first strengthen his spirit before descending into the depths of his soul. What might be found in the soul might be terrible and can hurt the person too much. He will be shocked when he comes to know thoroughly what he really is. Knowing the self requires bravery, strength and determination. Determination gives faith and certainty that the search is necessary and important.

The early stage of fighting against lust should be made consciously and with sufficiently strong equipment. They must stand on a firm base of values. A healthy person is capable of doing so. An unfinished or adolescent soul is not ready for a lifelong path of asceticism. If a person comes into church and he seems to know the orders and is fighting against lust, but is not ready for it, there is a great risk that he will soon be taken into care because of neurosis, or might even be sectioned. Careless spiritual guidance can lead to a spiritual catastrophe. The soul loses its form. It is therefore important to first become sure of one's courage and certainty and only then to start searching for one's lusts. In the beginning, man should know that searching for lusts can be very painful.

The soul should be searched carefully every day. Man should assess what happened each day. If man carefully assesses his life daily he will notice that every day the Lord offers up something new of Himself. One must ask one's self,

what I did today, why did I not do so in some other way instead. Having analyzed every deed, man will find himself learning something new about himself. This new thing reveals the sick phenomena of the soul and its lustful states. How does one know what lust is, then? It can be experienced during analysis. It can also be experienced at the moment of sinning. Rarely during the event itself does man have the time to experience and feel lust. When spiritual experience increases, the method of analyzing one's self expresses instantly the cause of the deeds and thoughts. Initially when analyzing deeds, one should concentrate on the feeling of discomfort or dissatisfaction that occurs when recalling certain events. The soul's nature is to flee and hide from the feeling of discomfort. Freud called this habit denial. It is not pleasant to face the unconscious. Denial mechanisms originate in childhood and start to function at age of six; we do not notice it ourselves when we use them. An uncomfortable feeling somewhere in certain situations shows the failure hidden in there. This is one method of recognizing false thoughts whose roots are in lust or can lead to it. In feeling discomfort one must learn what caused that particular sensation.

Another way is the conscious way. Every deed must be thought of on the basis of one's own values. If the person is a Christian, these values are God's orders, the order of love and the Ten Commandments, i.e., what has been learned from the lives and experiences of the saints, as well as from the experience of living everyday life as a Christian. Man may find it useful to be in contact with a person who lives in a correct Christian manner. He will follow his habits, his views on other people, his ways of speech, etc. Man compares his inner life to outward deeds that he sees Christians performing. One's own deeds can be compared to those of others. However, inner life cannot be opened up to others. The soul's experience is unique and it cannot be transferred to another. There are so many different ways of assessing man, be they theoretical, practical or experiential!

This is the second, conscious, mechanism of studying one's deeds and analyzing them from the outside. There might be other ways. Everyone might also have their own ways of examining the righteousness and purity of their deeds and thoughts. Either way, at every bend in the path and every pang of consciousness man should stop and think. In such situations, man should turn to the spiritual father if he has one and ask for advice. As a matter of fact, the elders have achieved their station through a comparable detailed self-examination of their deeds and lusts and through their resulting release.

One of the greatest problems of Christian psychology when it comes to dealing with lust is how lust enters man. Is lust naturally in man or has it come from outside and infected man? In other words, is man a slave to lust or free to live by

lust or can he conquer it? According to the Christian view man is free. But release is not easy.

In the first centuries of Christian science the commonly accepted thought was that man was created without lust. Isaac of Niniveh wrote that "man does not naturally have lust."

Also commonly accepted was the fact that the inclination to lust was in man from the first moments onward. Macarius of Egypt wrote: "Some secret filth and darkness of lust has come from the crime of Adam into all people, contrary to man's pure nature and it darkens and contorts the body and soul."

According to all Church Fathers, "the predisposition to lust originates in original sin and from man's own sins and it continues from generation to generation." Human nature was originally free from lust. The predisposition to become infected by lust is caused by damage to man's nature. At birth we all have a predisposition to be infected by lust and become ill from it. It is not surprising that lustfulness exists in humans from before they begin to recognize their sins and to repent of them.

If lust is understood like this it cannot be personified. Lust is not a creature that has its own will or strength to enslave man. Most of the Orthodox mystics and theologians feel this way. Lust is not a spirit but a psycho-spiritual phenomenon that appears in man's soul, is there and which can be cured. Lust is a derivative of human nature, not an individual spiritual creation like bad spirits or demons.

Lust can be defined in the following way: lust is an autonomous psychological complex which has in it structures that are mental, emotional, motivating, subject to will and substantive. These can dominate the soul, dictating man's behavior and affecting the inner life of the soul and the structure of human behavioral psychology.

It is important to emphasize that lust is autonomic and is therefore very persistent and long-lasting. Man strives for endurance and autonomy. It is difficult to fight against lust because it is in the soul separate from man's will, reason and hopes. Lust seems to be shielded from the influences of will and reason.

Lust destroys since it replaces man's free actions. Lust replaces man's normal behavior. It would be easy to list a large amount of examples of how man, instead of feeding and caring for his body, actually feeds his lusts, and instead of resting, sleeps much more than necessary.

Lust causes suffering because it is either insatiable or aggressive in its relationship to man. It is like a terror or unquenchable thirst that forces man to suffer, causes concern and depression and infects the atmosphere, the same as any other pathological state of the soul.

Lust is the reshaping of the soul in both a psychological and an ascetic point of view. Lustfulness does not belong in human nature. They are the cancers of the soul even though the soul itself is the reason for the lustfulness. A true, real man is God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26).

God's Image

The idea of man as God's image is based on the Book of Genesis. This biblical concept permeates the whole of biblical anthropology. The Christian teaching on man is based on this concept.

God's image is the basis of man but also its eternal future that will dawn on the "eighth day." In other words, God's image is a fundamental theological doctrine upon which the anthropology and psychology of Christianity are founded.

What makes this different to scientific psychology? The difference is in the conception of what separates man from animal in both psychological and social life. Man is made from "different dough," and really from two different natures – biological and spiritual. In the natural sciences man is only seen as *Homo sapiens* whereas humanism and especially Christian humanism sees man as God's image. Man is created and lives in two worlds. He is an inhabitant of the whole universe, both the visible and invisible. But man is not split in two but is whole. By the wholeness of man we mean an individual, that in the Eastern Christian tradition has ancient roots. This tradition relates to the concept of hypostasis.

In the Church Fathers' theology regarding hypostasis they all essentially follow the same line of thinking. According to it, man is a person. Origen writes: "Our most important substance is that which is God's image and the other, subjected as a result of the Fall, which was created from the dust."

This connection between the image of God in man and hypostasis is very precious to us because it shows what is meant by the person in theology. After Origen, this theme has not been developed. Additionally, the Church Fathers combine hypostasis and being. Being is not the same as essence *(ousia)* or nature. Being comes from the essence's common and private features and is inimitable and

unique. But being, on the one hand, leads us to emphasize individuality and on the second hand to emphasize nature, essence. Being as being created is not the same as the Creator's being, but is by nature gifted being which focuses on essence and its carrier, the person. This means that created being is personal being and if hypostasis means being then it is private being and then hypostasis is a characterization of the person.

As we have seen, the concept of hypostasis helps us to understand human nature before the creation of man. Man is primarily a hypostasis and nature is what is given by the hypostasis. Hypostasis, however, is not perfect but stems from the fountain of Godly grace. God grants the hypostasis to man. Man's created person is a gift, since God created man in His own image.

In each man, following the image of Christ, his human person is a place of connection and through Christ obtains a divine-human form, i.e., becomes a hypostasis. It is man's self-knowledge that presupposes divine consciousness and human deification happens: "we will come to them and make our home with them." (Joh. 14:23)

The fact that the hypostasis is created means three things. Firstly man's hypostasis does not have a prime cause, it is inseparably connected to the Creator and all that happens to it is God's work, His thoughts, love and will. Secondly, man's hypostasis is divine – it is the image of hypostasis. Thirdly, the hypostasis is ontologically above nature, since it is not derived from nature because the subjugated being is from the dust and the living spirit, the image, is from God.

"Our most important substance is that which is God's image and the other, subjected as a result of the Fall, which was created from the dust." (Origen)

The hypostasis-person, therefore, is God's image. "In us we have a person that is the living image of God." (Metropolitan Anton Surožki) "The person is God's image and likeness in man." (N. A. Berdjaev)

God's image shows the kinship and origin and shows man as godlike and God as manlike insofar as one can overturn the commonly accepted saying: "the incarnation is a prerequisite of the Fall" and say: originally man's creation as God's image happened because foretold by incarnation and through it, by its essence, it is inspired by divine humanity.

"What in man is so precious that it can be named God's image and likeness? The answer is the following: the spiritual person is worthy."

"The Son's divine hypostasis is one in Christ, many in man."

Before we can talk about the features of God's image, we must necessarily take into account that God's image is not a natural likeliness of God, nor is it a seed in the body or soul whose growth depends on man's maturity. God's image is rather a word that is shown to man – though he does not always hear it and though it doesn't always get sown into good earth (the parable of the sower). This word does not belong to man, but God. If man hears it, he rejoices and grows. If man does not hear it, he remains empty. God's image is an opportunity to change into a godly being. Because no other image is available, it is only using this image that man can develop. If man does not develop into something like God, he doesn't develop at all. This, however, does not mean that conscious godliness would help man's person to develop. Man can be unaware of his godliness, can think of himself as a completely autonomous being, but his person will grow and develop as God's image. Unconscious personal tendencies are of course limited and do not lead to the moulding of the spiritual person but are as strong as the conscious ones. This is how St. Paul described a spiritual individual. This type of person perhaps feels that his advance is his own merit, but actually God's image's features grow in him – though perhaps not in their entirety, but rather worldly and carnally and even sinfully – but as divine features.

These features are freedom, autocracy, spirituality, reason, creativity, uniqueness and universality, love. In the order listed above are the features of God's image most commonly found in man as described by the Church Fathers. There is no conceptual system or links between these features hidden in the order.

Conclusion

The view of man as God's image reflects various, non-naturalist views of man. This approach based on a biblical view of humanity requires other types of psychological methodologies and paradigms. They are, however, scientific methods and paradigms. Christian psychology is not based only on the phenomena of the psyche or in their depictions and research but also on the knowledge of man given by God.

We do not only see in people various recognizable phenomena, but also the secret of spiritual essence, a gracious connection to the other world with God and the healing of the unidentified soul, which is not connected to medical science or psychotherapeutic activity. However, this does not mean that Christian psychology underestimates the knowledge provided by classical psychology. Rather, one should speak of science expanding into a possible spiritual, future world.

THE FOUNDATIONS AND APPLICATION OF LUTHERAN SOCIAL ETHICS

Rev. Dr Antti Raunio

1 Views held by the doctrinal dialogues to date on the social responsibility of Churches and Christians

The topic of the 1977 theological discussions in Kiev was "Salvation and the kingdom of peace: the object of faith and the ethical mission". Based on the presentations and discussions, the conference drew conclusions that some are using for the basis of their discussion today. The conference proposed three conclusions regarding the relationship between salvation and Christian social responsibility, and also three perspectives on the basis and character of the church's social work:

1. Salvation and Christians' social responsibility are closely linked. Christians are citizens of both the heavenly and the earthly kingdoms. As such they have been called to strive towards the spiritual kingdom and at the same time to be active builders of a just earthly kingdom.

2. As children of the one Heavenly Father, Creator and Provider, all people are under the protection of His universal laws. God's will and providence affect everyone. For this reason Christians have been called to fulfill their calling and service in every community, in order to benefit that community and make it just.

3. Through the salvation offered to all people initiated by Christ the Redeemer, the final destination of which is God's kingdom, the powers of God's kingdom have already begun to have an effect in this world. This is the second precondition of Christian action and social responsibility. Christian life and action should aim at promoting the kingdom of God. Therefore, Christian social responsibility has a dual foundation.

The social responsibility of the church was understood to derive from its own message and character. The ways in which social responsibility is enacted cannot

therefore be derived solely from historical conditions, nor can they be equated with any human ideology.

The Church's mission is not to create political agendas or to determine what sort of social or political system exists in each country. The Church should instead increase Christians' ethical awareness and influence their conscience, so that they can actively use their Christian freedom to fight social injustice and build a more just and humane social structure.

Since these conclusions were drawn up, great social upheaval has taken place in both Eastern and Western Europe, that have led churches to re-evaluate the bases of their social ethics and the practical solutions derived from them. Churches are increasingly considering social ethical issues together, to present society with a unified message. At the same time it is necessary to maintain awareness of the churches' own backgrounds and use them to look for possibilities for shared conclusions.

One of the characteristic traits of Lutheran social-ethical thought is expressed in the theses of the Kiev conference, which declares that a Christian is a citizen of both the earthly and the spiritual kingdoms. It must be noted, however, that the concept of the earthly kingdom has two meanings in Lutheran usage, which are occasionally confused. Firstly, the earthly kingdom can be related to the concept derived from the Early Church doctrine of the two kingdoms, states or cities, one of which belongs to God and the other of which belongs to God's adversary, Satan. Secondly, the earthly realm can refer to God's earthly kingdom, which together with the spiritual kingdom is God's weapon in the fight against evil. One of the central – and most contentious – issues in Lutheran social ethics is the relationship between these two kingdoms.

Theological social ethics includes issues regarding the social responsibility of Christians and the churches, the ethical dimensions of society and its institutions and activities. The dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has thus far emphasized justice as a central ethical dimension of society, and Christians' responsibility in supporting justice. One of the central principles of justice is respecting and defending human dignity as well as upholding and promoting peace.

2 *The separation between the earthly and spiritual kingdoms as a question for Lutheran social ethics.*

The distinction between the two kingdoms that Lutherans make does not directly answer the question about the relationship between the social responsibility of the church and society. It cannot be simply said that the church is the spiritual kingdom and society and the state is the earthly kingdom. Instead, the earthly kingdom is the "external order" and the spiritual kingdom is the "internal order". The earthly kingdom concerns everything that is needed to maintain and safeguard this temporal and worldly life, the spiritual kingdom on the other hand concerns eternal, heavenly, life. The power of the earthly kingdom only extends to a person's body and external actions, as well as reason, will and conscience where these affect external actions. The spiritual kingdom controls the inner life, faith, hope, and love. In order to accomplish the mission of the earthly kingdom, God has set up a number of offices, such as authorities, judges, teachers, fathers, and mothers. In the earthly kingdom, God wields his power through these offices. The office holders are therefore God's servants and their power is divinely ordained. (ei ole oikea käännös, ajatus on: … and they exercise power given by God.)

In an era of democratic social order, one might ask whether this notion of power is outdated. After all, democracy is based on the idea that power belongs to the people, who then select representatives from among themselves to use that power for the benefit of the people. Firstly, it must be noted that the Lutheran concept of the earthly kingdom does not just pertain to the power of political decision-making and implementation, but to all power whose mission is to maintain and safeguard life and creation. Although in modern society this takes place through a variety of actions and tasks, the central offices of the earthly regiment remain the same as before. The way in which these office holders and task managers are chosen does not change the fact that all the power originates with God. Even in a democratic society we can hold on to the notion that all power entrusted to people is God's power. Those to whom power is entrusted are not pursuing their own agenda, but their mission is to serve the will of God, which can be succinctly expressed with one word: love.

The spiritual kingdom is a person's inner life and salvation, a person's state in relation to God. Here the earthly kingdom has no jurisdiction, it can only ensure the freedom to proclaim the gospel. There is a right to oppose an earthly government that prevents the preaching of the gospel. In the spiritual kingdom God does not delegate His power to offices. He wields it through the word and the sacraments. This is why the office of the Church is called ministry of the word and sacraments, Both external and internal power. The mission of the

Church is therefore to join people in union with God by proclaiming the word and performing the sacraments. God Himself is present in his word and in the sacraments of baptism and communion, and through these he makes believers partakers of divine life. Partaking of divine love renews and shapes people from within so that they begin to fulfill God's will freely and joyfully, without external compulsion. In other words, love of God and love of neighbors is kindled within them.

Thus the goal of both the earthly and spiritual kingdoms is revealed to be the accomplishing of love. Both external and internal power are about accomplishing God's love.

Luther describes the relationship between the earthly and spiritual kingdoms as follows: "For worldly lordship is an image, shadow, or figure of the lordship of Christ. The office of preaching – where it exists as God ordained it – brings and bestows eternal righteousness, eternal peace, and eternal life; thus does St. Paul extol it in II Corinthians 4. Worldly government, on the other hand, preserves peace, justice, and life, which is temporal and transient. Nevertheless, worldly government is a glorious ordinance and splendid gift of God, who has instituted and established it and will have it maintained… If there were no worldly government, one man could not stand before another; each would necessarily devour the other, as irrational beasts devour one another. Therefore as it is the function and honor of the office of preaching to make sinners saints, dead men live, damned men saved, and the devil's children God's children, so it is the function and honor of worldly government to make men out of wild beasts and to prevent men from becoming wild beasts. It protects a man's body so that no one may slay it; it protects a man's wife so that no one may seize and defile her; it protects a man's child, his daughter or son, so that no one may carry them away and steal them; it protects a man's house so that no one may break in and wreck things; it protects a man's fields and cattle and all his goods so that no one may attack, steal, plunder, or damage them." (WA 30 II, 554, 11-55, 13. Trans. *Luther's Works*, Vol. 46 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967].) The mission of the earthly kingdom is here expressed along the lines of the second tablet of the Ten Commandments. The idea is that the earthly kingdom will protect a person's body, family and property against all external harm. At the same time it is important to note that this external justice that is accomplished and maintained by the earthly kingdom, is but an image and a shadow of Christ's kingdom. In other words, the earthly and spiritual kingdoms are not completely different, but eternal justification and earthly justice (for which Greek and Latin use the same term, *dikaiosyne, iustitia*) share something in common.

Before the relationship between the two kingdoms can be accurately described, it must be noted that both are kingdoms of God. This is their first shared feature. Because both kingdoms belong to God's sphere of power, in order to grasp their relationship, one must first examine the concept of God's being and actions. What is God like and how does He use His power?

3 God's giving love as a basis for social ethics

In the Large Catechism contained within the Book of Concord of the Lutheran Church it says: "Through this knowledge we come to love and delight in all the commandments of God because we see that God gives himself completely to us, with all his gifts and his power, to help us keep the Ten Commandments: the Father gives us all creation, Christ all his works, the Holy Spirit all his gifts." The Triune God gives people Himself and everything He has. The Catechism further specifies this by saying that God gave us for our own use everything that is in heaven and earth. In addition to that, he gave his Son and his Holy Spirit in order to bring us into union with Him through them.

It is often assumed that in Lutheran theology, social ethics is limited to creation theology. Even though creation theology is essential, the view is too limited. Creation is about the work of the Triune God and creation theology is also only to be understood in its entirety through redemption and sanctification, i.e., in conjunction with the second and third articles of faith. Creation and all it contains cannot be recognized as a good gift from God without God's goodness made apparent in Christ and the faith generated by the Holy Spirit, who trusts in God's goodness and receives His gift.

From the perspective of social ethics it is noteworthy that, according to the Lutheran view, God on the one hand gives everything in heaven and earth for people to make use of, and on the other hand He gives all His strength to support and aid people so that they might live in accordance with God's will, i.e., fulfilling the Ten Commandments. All God's power is contained within the two kingdoms, the earthly and spiritual realms.

In what way does God give Himself and all His gifts to humanity? This happens through the Word, in creation, redemption and sanctification. God creates everything with his word, in the redemption the Word itself becomes flesh and saves humanity from sin and death, and sanctification, i.e., union with God, happens through the word and the sacraments.

When God, as part of the process of creation, gives Himself to humanity with all that has been created, the intention of this gift is that the products of creation will serve and benefit one another, and that people receive what they need to live. The result of God's giving creation is that nothing is created for its own self, but to serve the rest of creation. (StA 4, 251, 22-24; BSELK 650, 27-30)

4 Speech as a mode of action for God

The God of the Christian faith is a speaking God. God does not rest, inert, in Himself, but is constantly acting. His actions can be described from different perspectives and with different terms, but the common denominator between all His actions is speech. God speaks through His word. This He did even before anything had been created. Thus, God's word cannot be created or temporal, but the word must also be eternal. "The word was with God" means that there is one divine nature and essence, but not just one divine person. Because there is only one God, this God must be the Word, which he speaks, and there is nothing in divine nature that is not present in the Word. God is entirely within the Word. God's Word is so like God, that godliness is completely contained within it.

The Word of God therefore contains within it the entire essence of divine nature. God speaks His Word about Himself so that His entire divinity follows the Word and, in keeping with its nature, remains in the Word and is the Word.

The Word that is with God is the uncreated Word, a divine thought and internal gesture of God, it is the same as God but nonetheless a different person, i.e., the Son of God. God does not only contain the speaker of the word and the Word itself, but also the hearer of the Word. For the Holy Spirit hears what the Father says on giving birth to the Son. (WA 28, 51, 34–52,4; WA 59, 298, 13–15). In giving birth to the Word, heard by the Spirit, God is speaking His Word within Himself, the Word remains in Him and is never separated from Him. Nevertheless, the Word does not echo in emptiness, it always has an audience. This is how God speaks with Himself to Himself. Even though the Spirit is the primary audience of the Word, it can be said that the Father and Son also hear the uncreated speech. This is because, even though God's persons are separate, they also overlap. The Spirit is in the Father, so that He hears His own speech and the Spirit is also in the Son, so the Son can hear what the Father is saying. It can also be said that the divine persons speak to one another, even though the Father is the one who is truly doing the speaking by giving birth to the Word. The Son speaks the Father's words, and the Spirit repeats what it has heard from the Father.

To humans God announces Himself as a speaker who has with Him the uncreated Word. With His uncreated Word He has created everything. By speaking, God calls what does not exist into being. He does not speak using grammatical words that describe things that already exist, but He speaks real things that subsist (subsistenta res). For example, sun, moon, sky, earth, Peter, Paul, me, and you are all words spoken by God. More to the point, every created thing is a syllable or letter in a Creation as uttered by God. For this reason all creation on the one hand demonstrated God's giving love and on the other hand preaches or proclaims God's word.

5 The created as gifts and gift-givers of God

Humanity has been created and is intended as part of a system of love, where all creation serves and benefits one another. Along with the Devil, humanity is the only created thing that has separated itself from this order of existing for the benefit of others. Humanity's distorted love after the Fall looks to serve itself in all things. This self-seeking has both a spiritual and a social aspect. Deep down, self-seeking people set themselves in God's place. They want to be the source and achiever of all good and make the decisions regarding what is good and what is bad. Self-seekers do not allow God to be God, i.e., goodness itself and the donor and maker of all good. At the same time, self-seekers place their own interests above the interests of their neighbors and act accordingly; they attempt to keep all good things to themselves and are stingy when it comes to sharing them with others. Self-seekers tend to turn both God and other human beings into tools for achieving their own self-interest. As a result they are neither spiritually righteous nor socially just. In other words, they do not render unto God that which is God's, nor unto their neighbors what they need.

The mission of the spiritual kingdom is to inspire spiritual righteousness, people who believe in God and respect Him as the source and giver of all good things and who receive the good as a gift from God and pass it on to those in need. The purpose of the earthly kingdom is to achieve and maintain societal justice. The spiritual kingdom does not just pertain to humans' relationship to God. If God's spiritual rule were to be perfectly realized during this life, then the earthly kingdom would not be needed at all to achieve societal justice and love. But not all people are within the sphere of God's spiritual rule, and even for those who are, its influence is only in its beginning. That is why the earthly kingdom is necessary to safeguard people's life in society.

The Large Catechism describes all the things that God has created with His word: God has given people life and maintains it constantly. He has given the body and the soul, all the parts of the body, the senses, reason and understanding, and everything else that is part of life. He also provides food and drink, clothing, wages, spouses and children, servants, a home and everything else. In addition, He has provided all of creation to supply our needs. He has also provided all temporal good, such as good government, peace and security. Faith involves recognizing that God protects and preserves everything he has provided from evil and accident (Book of Concord, 376).

What is crucial for social ethics is the Lutheran view that God is the creator, giver and maintainer of all of life's basic needs: nutrition, livelihood, home, peace and security. The same is true for human reason and understanding, as well as good government and authority. These are all things that the Triune God calls into existence with His word, and that remain in existence through the power of His word.

6 *Humanity as broker of God's gifts in the earthly and spiritual kingdoms*

According to the Lutheran interpretation, humanity can be examined from a philosophical as well as a theological standpoint. Philosophically, humans are understood as soul and body comprising a whole. Reason, will, and conscience are part of the soul. The starting point for moral activity is reason, which contains certain moral principles. By applying these principles humans attempt to resolve the right course of action in concrete situations. Humans' natural abilities to apply moral laws are rather changeable. In a moral sense, humans have free will to choose (*liberum arbitrium*). In other words, they can make decisions and choices between different deeds and actions. In Lutheran theology, the conscience has three meanings. Firstly, it means the conclusion of moral reasoning, i.e., a command or recommendation to perform a certain act. Secondly, it means an assessment formed after the fact of whether the act was right or wrong. Thirdly, conscience can be used to mean the same as natural reason, familiar with the basic principles of morality. In this meaning humans are capable of at least some morally good actions; in other words, they can perform externally good deeds.

From the theological perspective, humans are discussed in relation to God, and in this case their inner qualities – their hearts – are examined. In this context the heart refers to the whole person in relation to God, and includes reason, will, and conscience. The state of fallen humans is such that their reason does not recognize

God correctly, their will does not love in the way that God wishes, and they do not have a healthy conscience before God. To recognize God properly requires faith, which brings Christ with it and demonstrates God's goodness. In order to love according to God's will one needs the Holy Spirit, who renews one's will, and only in the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit are humans and their actions such that the conscience joins with God's approval. According to theological interpretation, conscience means God's assessment of humans, not just deeds, but everything that people are and do.

In relation to the world, society and other people, believers work together with God. The Triune God brings them along to make love possible, and humans' mission is to use their reason and will to promote the things that promote the actualizing of divine love. Thus they are simultaneously working in both the earthly and the spiritual kingdoms without mixing them together.

7 Natural moral law and the use of reason in society.

At least in the Nordic Countries a defining trait of Lutheran social ethics is considered to be the emphasis on natural moral law and natural reason. The issue is presented so that there is no especial Christian ethics, but ethical solutions and actions are based on the moral sense present in humans' natural reason. Based on this, everyone can judge for themselves what is right and wrong. What is set up as the opposite of the ethics of natural reason is the ethics of faith, which is based on a separation of natural and Christian ethics. Christian ethics is based on the commandments and instructions of the Bible, and acting according to it necessitates faith. According to the ethics of faith, is only possible for Christian believers to perform genuinely moral actions. Even though in the Nordic Countries the ethics of natural moral law have been widely represented, in Central Europe and North America, for example, Lutheranism is often considered a proponent of the sort of Biblical ethics that rejects the concept of natural moral law as a foundation of ethics. Generally, therefore, there is confusion about the basis of Lutheran social ethics.

There are many reasons for this confusion. Some of Luther's statements may easily appear to be contradictory. On the one hand, he refers in many contexts to the natural law that is written in people's hearts; on the other hand he might emphasize the inability of the reason of the fallen to understand the content of natural law. He might praise human reason as God's greatest gift, but also consider it completely corrupted. Luther's most important collaborator, Philipp Melanchthon also wrote a great deal about natural moral law as the foundation for

societal legislation and morals. His view differs to a certain extent from Luther's. Luther's and Melanchthon's different ways of thinking also doubtless contributed to the confusion regarding the basis of ethics in later Lutheranism.

The truth is, however, that both Luther and Melanchthon consider moral law to be the main starting point for societal ethics. According to both of them, humans have natural reason – a gift given as part of creation – that recognizes God's law. Natural moral law and natural reason do not refer to anything separate from God's law and will, and therefore are not in conflict with the ethical content of the Bible. The central tenets of natural moral law are, according to Luther, the Golden Rule ("do unto others as you would have others do unto you"), the ethic of reciprocity, and the Ten Commandments. Melanchthon, on the other hand, is of the opinion that natural moral law is formed from the principles that most closely resemble the Ten Commandments. The Decalogue therefore clarifies and specifies what is already contained within natural reason. The main difference between Luther and Melanchthon is that, according to Luther, natural moral law contains a demand to love God above everything and to love one's neighbor as one would one's self. In other words, it focuses both on external deeds and the internal affect. According to Melanchthon, natural moral law only really concerns external actions, because the internal affects are something that natural reason cannot comprehend. The commandment of love is therefore included only in the law announced by God.

Luther emphasizes the unity of content of all laws: God demands in his law both inner love and external deeds. Natural law is of course the foundation of societal justice, but Luther did not think that people would themselves be able, using their own capabilities, to do what natural law demands. Melanchthon makes a distinction between natural law and the divine law, in that the former is focused on external deeds and the latter on both external and internal deeds. According to Melanchthon, societal life can be built on natural law, but divine law shows the ultimate goal.

It seems that it all boils down to a small difference in terminology between Luther and Melanchthon. To Melanchthon natural moral law means approximately the same as the external meaning of natural law does to Luther. This is, however, not an inconsequential difference. According to Luther, the basis for moral and social ethics is the natural law that requires love of one's neighbor and God as well as concrete external actions. According to Melanchthon, the basis is natural moral law which requires external actions. According to Luther, the law declared by God does not add anything to natural moral law, but only strengthens its demands. Even though societal morals and justice can be performed outwardly, they cannot be separated from the commandment to love. In the background is the idea that

even the earthly regiment executes God's giving love and the law – even natural law – always contains the commandment to love God and one's neighbors. In this sense natural and Christian ethics are the same. In Luther's model, the content of natural reason should be understood through the concept of the giving love. Using their reason humans can participate in realizing God's love in the world.

According to Melanchthon, the declared law also brings with it a commandment to love. Natural ethics and Christian ethics are therefore not entirely the same in content. Societal life can be built on natural moral law without the commandment to love. If, however, the desire is to achieve the highest and ultimate goal as well as the societal goal, then God's declared law must be followed. To Melanchthon, love is connected above all to the achieving of the highest goal. Faith sets people's inner life or affects in order, so that they are directed towards appropriate aims, i.e., they love the proper aims in the right order. This is not something human reason is capable of.

The content of the natural moral law that can be traced back to Luther can be expressed using the Golden Rule. However, from a historical-theological perspective, the concept is much older, and it is expressed by many of the Church Fathers. The Golden Rule has been interpreted in different ways in practice. Sometimes a distinction has been made between the "natural" Golden Rule and the "Christian" Golden rule. The natural Golden Rule would refer to some principle of reciprocity that would be used to promote both one's neighbor's and one's own advantage. The Christian Golden Rule, on the other hand, would refer to a commandment to love one's neighbor selflessly without thought for one's own benefit. Luther's notion is that this distinction is not necessary, because the Golden Rule is a commandment to love selflessly. It sets the pursuit of one's own advantage as an example of how one should love one's neighbor and seek out what is beneficial to them.

The Golden Rule is a natural moral law when it expresses this commandment to love. Secondly, the Golden Rule also provides a framework for moral consideration. In this consideration people empathize with their neighbors and ask using both reason and emotion, what would I wish to be done to me, if I were in my neighbor's position? The intention is not to "transfer" one's own needs and wishes onto another person, but to determine what the other person truly needs and how to best serve them in that situation. Good intentions are insufficient criteria for a good deed, and people cannot know what is best for other people without finding out what is best for them. According to the Lutheran view, applying the Golden Rule in this way should be practiced in families between spouses and between parents and children, as well as at the political level between figures of

authority and the populace. In the realm of the earthly kingdom, it is necessary when empathizing with other people to take into account those offices where people engage with each other.

Even though the Golden Rule is the natural moral code etched in people's hearts, its application is not a question of an autonomous reason separated from God's will. According to Luther, the Holy Spirit itself continuously inscribes the Golden Rule onto people's hearts. This is how God maintains human reason. When the Holy Spirit preaches the law, he presents the commandment and the exhortation but does not give the power – which is love – needed to fulfill the law. This can only be obtained through the gospel and faith. Without faith, the Golden Rule can only be applied outwardly, without merging internally with the law. In faith, the Holy Spirit is present as love and does not merely preach the Golden Rule, but also does what the law requires.

8 Natural moral law, righteousness of faith and social justice

The application of the Golden Rule is, according to the Lutheran view, the foundation of all social legislation and justice. Natural justice is universally applicable, it is an eternal and shared justice and if some law is contrary to natural justice, it is not a true law. In Luther's interpretation of the Golden Rule, love, justice and moderation are closely linked. Applying justice according to love is moderation, which means taking into account individuals, circumstances and the situation in a way that abstract law alone is not capable of. The moderate following of justice is all about empathy in accordance with the Golden Rule. From this perspective, the idea of the Golden Rule as a foundation for justice and moderation could be applied today, even though modern jurisprudence no longer speaks of natural moral law. Even so, one might question whether legislation properly takes into account the real circumstances of people affected by the law, and also whether moderation is sufficiently practiced in the interpretation of the law.

The precondition for the application of justice and moderation is a concept of a God who is constantly giving, and also a concept of creation through which God's giving takes place. This is apparent in the close connection between the structure of creation and natural moral law. Creation is an instrument through which God accomplishes His giving love and the content of natural law is the commandment to accomplish divine love.

Even things created after the Fall express the content of natural law by existing and serving others. Humanity's sin has however weakened its ability to fulfill its original mission. In the case of humans, the connection with the original purpose is broken, but it has not completely disappeared. According to Luther, the best example of the vestiges of the original creation is a mother's love and care for her child. Maternity is one of those offices or "masks" that God uses to give creations what they need. The natural moral law demands from people just the sort of law that a mother demonstrates when caring for her child. This type of love does not require any sort of merit from the object of the love. Selfless and giving love should extend to all people. (WA 40 II, 71, 73-74)

What does this sort of conception of love have to do with justice, righteousness and justification? Firstly, it is important that loving is not based on any sort of merit or even the worth of the object. Love estimates the deeds to be done for others based on what they need, not what they deserve. The justification of the godless is an act of God's love in precisely this sense. God takes what action sinners need, He does not reward their deeds. Through justification God gives His own righteousness to the sinner through faith, so that the believer becomes part of divine righteousness. (WA 40 I, 229, 18-39; 283, 25-284,19; 297, 15-34). Divine righteousness and justice give to others what they need.

God was operating according to this sense of justice and righteousness already when He created the world and gave people everything that they need to live. The Fall means, among other things, that people cease to recognize and acknowledge God's gifts. One of the central elements of sinfulness is that people are not righteous with respect to God. The only thing that God "needs" from people is that they let Him be their God. This means that God is, to them, goodness itself and the source of all good things. It is only when people allow God to be their God that they can receive this goodness from Him and act justly towards other people. This in turn means that they try to achieve what others need without factoring in their own interest or expecting some sort of reward for deeds done for another.

This concept of justice is based on a specific interpretation of the classic principle of justice. According to the principle of *suum cuique*, everyone should receive what belongs to them. According to Luther's interpretation, those things and deeds that belong to someone should be evaluated according to needs, not merit. The natural law, as expressed in the Golden Rule, ethics of reciprocity and the Decalogue, demand the sort of faith and love for God that allow Him to be the giver of all good things and a helping hand in all need. At the same time it requires people to set themselves in their neighbor's shoes and treat him or her as they

themselves would wish to be treated. (WA 10 II, 379, 13-16; 380, 4-11; WA 16, 525, 18-21)

Through the justification that happens in faith, the believer becomes a partaker of Christ's righteousness, which at the same time is a fulfillment of the requirement of natural law. The believer allows God to be goodness and the source of all good and begins to live – in Christ and with Christ – in accordance with the divine and natural law serving others by using God's gifts beneficially.

9 Authority as protector of the daily bread

The meeting of the needs of the temporal and bodily life the Catechism explains through an examination of the request in the Lord's Prayer "give us this day our daily bread". This request encompasses everything that affects life in this world. Daily bread is necessary for this life. These necessities do not include only what is necessary for the body such as food, drink, and clothing, but it also includes peaceful interactions in all circumstances with the people who are part of our circle of daily life. This means relationships with family and neighbors as well as society and government. If these are disturbed and do not function as they are supposed to, then the satisfying of life's basic needs is also disturbed and life cannot be maintained over time. Luther in fact emphasizes prayer on behalf of earthly authority and government, because God mainly uses earthly authority to safeguard and maintain daily bread and temporal life. If God does not provide a stable and peaceful government, people cannot hold or safely and gladly make use of the gifts God has bestowed. (Book of Concord 393)

In the explanation of the Fourth Commandment the Large Catechism states that God gives to us food, house and home, protection and security through the civil government, as if they were parents. God therefore uses rulers, authority and decision-makers to bestow on humanity what they need to survive. Specifically, Luther means that the responsibility of civil authority is to ensure that the basic requirements for life are met and maintained, arranging for protection against threats, seeing that justice is done and security and peace prevail.

The conclusion that is often drawn from this is that Lutheranism promotes the idea of a Rechtstaat whose social responsibility is limited mainly to upholding the justice system. In reality, the Lutheran perception of the social responsibility of the civil authority is much broader. It is a matter of the civil authority's role in distributing God's good gifts to the populace. The responsibility of the civil authority or government is not, in Lutheran interpretation, that the state alone bears

responsibility, but responsibility affects every citizen and human community. Lutheran social ethics strives to join the social responsibility of the civil power to ensure basic needs with the individual's responsibility to promote the common good. Because people do not exist for themselves, their responsibility mainly lies in the security and welfare of others. In this regard the thinking differs from the concept that is nowadays more or less taken for granted that each individual is primarily responsible for himself and his own welfare.

10 Responsibility for livelihood, basic education and healthcare

Let us first consider the example of livelihood. The duty of the civil authority is to create and maintain circumstances in which people can work in peace and use the fruits of their labors towards their needs and the needs of others. As for those who cannot earn their own living due to illness, disability, age or some other reason, they are not to be left to their own devices, but it is the shared duty of the community to ensure that they have enough food and other basic necessities. Lutheran ethics supports the kind of society where there is enough social security for those who do not have the possibility of earning their own living.

One key mission of society is the battle against poverty. One of the basic principles of the Lutheran Reformation's social reforms was that there should be no beggars among Christians. Arrangements were made for each city with its hinterland to take care of the poor in its own region. At the same time it was ensured that the aid went to those truly in need. For this reason representatives were appointed who went around acquainting themselves with the conditions and helping those who could not provide for themselves.

Poverty was not understood simply as physical want, nor was the fight against poverty understood simply as dispensing alms. The other dimension of poverty was the lack of the knowledge and skills needed to survive. For this reason an important element in the fight against poverty was seeing to the educating and training of children and youth.

Even in the arranging of basic education the Lutheran perspective emphasizes the responsibility of the community and the civil authority. From the same shared coffers that assisted the poor, funds were used to hire teachers for all the children who had the gifts for learning. The teachers actually perform a duty meant for parents, but it was considered right that everyone receive equal opportunities and that learning was not dependent on the family's ability to provide it. Lutheran

social ethics supports the kind of society that organizes and ensures basic education for all its members regardless of their wealth and social position.

Thirdly, healthcare intended for the use of all was organized. The reformers urged the earthly authorities to build hospitals that would be available to all. This would provide a benefit to those who were in the weakest position and would not otherwise be able to afford care, but it also benefited society at large. Socially organized healthcare that is made available to all regardless of position or wealth also follows the principles of Lutheran social ethics.

11 International responsibility

The circumstances in which we now live naturally differ in many ways from the circumstances that gave rise to the Lutheran Reformation in the 16th century. Nordic society has nonetheless been distinctly influenced by Lutheran culture and thought. Many aspects of society that are characteristic of the Nordic welfare state can be traced back to the social reforms of the 16th century Reformation.

The biggest difference between then and now is that previously the basic units of social thinking were the municipality, the city, and the state. These haven't disappeared, but they have been joined by much broader units such as multinational communities and even the whole world. So-called globalization has resulted in the need to expand social ethics beyond the local and national level. It must be considered internationally as well. Global justice must be addressed, as well as safeguarding the human dignity of all people. This is because the economic, cultural and political interaction and dependency between people has increased rapidly. At the same time new divisions have been created. Some have been able to participate in this development and benefited from it; others have been left outside it and their position has weakened.

Promoting justice on a global level is much more challenging and complicated than on a national or state level. According to the Lutheran view point the responsibility of the international community is basically the same as at the local level. The gifts bestowed by God at creation belong to everyone and it is everyone's duty to ensure that all people can partake of them. On a global level this is done only partially and randomly. The vision of God's earthly realm being realized through different societal offices leads, in a globalizing world, to solutions being sought whereby justice can be promoted so that increasing numbers of people can partake of the benefit to be had from increasing interaction. This affects all

the different ways that are used to fight poverty: acquiring knowledge and skills, promoting healthcare, and livelihood.

The basic idea is not that social security, basic education and healthcare are solely the responsibility of society, i.e., the municipality, state, or international institutions. The responsibility rests mainly with the human community, where God uses both earthly power through the offices and spiritual power through the word and the sacraments. Nowadays people often think that in the Lutheran view, faith, the relationship with God and therefore the whole spiritual kingdom belong in the sphere of a person's private life, and have no public or societal significance. Lutheranism has always defended and considered the right to preach the Gospel openly to be a central and important matter that societal legislation ought to respect. The Gospel is a public thing, its real content is the salvation from sin and death that is accomplished in Christ, but the proclaiming of the Gospels also has a societal dimension. In defending the freedom to openly proclaim the Gospels the Lutheran Church is not mainly attempting to safeguard its own activities, but to offer a reminder of the way in which God and His salvation are present in this world. The societal aspect of the Gospels derives from the fact that the Triune God – who is the giving love – speaks and is present in them. The Triune God, present in the word, has an impact in the world by engendering faith and love, and love in turn engenders, sustains and strengthens the sort of righteousness that also shapes societal life.

12 The basic principles and applications of Lutheran social ethics

The starting point and foundation of Lutheran social ethics is the concept of God as love, where being and action are combined: God is goodness itself and the source and giver of all good. The God who gives Himself acts in the world through His speech, i.e., his Word. The Word is the Son, whom the Father speaks and the Spirit hears and receives. With His Word the Father creates and maintains creation. The Triune God operates in the world in two ways. These two ways are called the spiritual and earthly kingdoms. The spiritual kingdom refers to God's saving work, where, using the word and sacraments he engenders faith, hope and love and turns the faithful into partakers in Christ and eternal life. Together with Christ the faithful begin to fulfill God's law, i.e., commit acts of love towards their neighbors. Love also unites Christians so that they form a community where they give thanks to God for all good things and serve each other and all creation in love.

The earthly kingdom refers to God's work through which He fights against all evil that threatens His created world, and promotes peace and justice. In this work God uses "orders" and "offices" He has created that in modern parlance might be called structures and duties. The basic structures are the family and the political community, and offices and duties include mother, father, decision-makers and those who exercise power and officials such as the president, members of parliament, judges and police officers, teachers, doctors, and so forth. The main duty of these social offices is to protect life and promote and achieve justice.

As a result of God's earthly exercise of power, the ruling political community is the "picture and shadow" of the spiritual kingdom. In other words, it outwardly, and in a way, by force, achieves something similar to the spiritual community in love. The goal of the earthly community is to realize God's giving love so that members of the community receive what they need to live. As a result of the Fall, however, there are forces in the world that resist the realizing of the giving love. The foremost of these forces is human selfishness and self-seeking, which comes from unbelief. The spiritual kingdom is needed to engender and maintain faith in God's goodness and the earthly kingdom is needed as protection against the consequences of human lovelessness and selfishness.

In order to realize love, humans are meant to work together with the Triune God. In the earthly kingdom this cooperation happens through the social offices and in the spiritual kingdom it happens through Christ, present in faith, who renews and shapes people to be more like himself. People are meant to use their reason, their will and their body to realize God's giving love. The commandment to love was already written on humanity's hearts during creation, and they must constantly apply and practice it by placing themselves in someone else's position and asking what they would wish to have happen to themselves, were they that person. The Golden Rule of love should be applied both in social offices and in interpersonal relations.

In social offices the application of the Golden Rule requires taking into account the overall benefit to the whole community, i.e. peace, security, justice and welfare. Promoting peace and justice in the world means above else ensuring the basic necessities of life for all people. These necessities are sufficient livelihood, decent living quarters, basic education and healthcare. A safe and just society is one where the gaps between people's welfare do not grow too great. For that reason work at national, state and global levels to reduce poverty is the central social-ethical mission that churches can participate in and by proclaiming the law and the Gospel and by practicing national and international diakonia.

SOCIAL ETHICS IN THE CONTEXT OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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I

As our Finnish colleagues doubtless know, the treatise "Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" was published in 2000. The treatise in question deals with the Orthodox Church's stance on social-political and social-ethical issues. Immediately upon publication it received much attention and inspired lively discussion among the public unlike many other official, conceptual, treatises. Comments were received from both ends of the spectrum. Some accepted the treatise in its entirety, others strongly criticized it. For the most part, however, the feedback was positive. The text had indeed been composed to strike a balance, and the wide array of opinions and ideas regarding difficult social issues had been taken into account. This, in fact, inspired criticism from those who expected unilateral support from the Church on certain social-political matters. Regardless, one of the most important merits of the treatise was that it made a conceptual mark on the debate on social, social-political, social-economic, and social-ethical issues. The treatise is not so much the Church's final word on social issues, but rather an important tool in the conceptual handling of difficult social realities, and in developing the ties between the Church and society.

My presentation is not a summary of the treatise, nor shall I analyze it. Firstly, I wish to present the ecclesiastical-social, spiritual, and emotional context from which the treatise emerged. Secondly, I wish to consider the theological and philosophical underpinnings of the Orthodox Church's social-ethical discourse. Thirdly, we shall examine the problems that are relevant to current attempts to conceptualize social ethics.

II Framework

A scholar, learned in the birth of social studies of the Russian Orthodox Church, once wrote: "The Byzantine Church was in its time called upon to resist the traditions of the Roman state, in which religion was ascribed a number of social obligations, but did not allow the Church political consciousness." In Russia, on the other hand, the Church has grown up into a community separate from the state, and has had to take upon itself to a great extent the task of bolstering the state. Important milestones in Russia's political history include the elimination of the warring principalities, liberation from the yoke of the Tatars and the Mongols, and the centralization of the government, the so-called "Third Rome". These phases were unnecessary in Byzantium. The Church's role was to sanctify the emperor's power. Of Russia's tsars, even Ivan the Terrible leaned towards Byzantium, and declared that the job of the Church's priests was "to bless us with our consent".

As late as the 18th century, there was a serious political conflict between Patriarch Nikon and the tsar regarding the autonomy of Church administration. In Byzantium a similar conflict would not have arisen after the 10th and 11th centuries. From the beginning of the 19th to the middle of the 20th century, the Church had no right to become involved in political discourse, but, starting with the treatise "Orthodoxy. Despotism and democracy" the Church attempted to make renewed use of a resource to protect itself. Throughout this time other Orthodox churches similarly had no place in the political system, and their social dimension consisted mainly of preserving cultural identity.

In Russian orthodoxy the 20th century was a significant period in the development of ethics and social ethics.

Christian thought is inextricably linked with moral problematics which are concerned with people's behavior and nature when making different decisions regarding their calling. The moral teachings of the Church Fathers were reflected on, but in antiquity, the Middle Ages or early modern times these were not considered ethics per se. In Eastern Christianity, theology was understood primarily as meditation and communion with God, which in practice meant prayer, faith, trust, love and acting in accordance with one's beliefs. Theology was considered a synonym for prayer, meditation and the spiritual life.

In the medieval period, the more modern concept of theology began to be formed. Theology began to mean the systematization and presentation of divine truths, adopting the format of discourse, at the level of a person's rational resources. …

During the period the subdivision of fields of theology still in use today was first adopted. Eventually, this definition was adopted by the Orthodox Church as well.

As a consequence of the fall of Byzantium, the threat to the union and the spiritual upheaval of the Reformation, theological schools along the lines of those in the Latin West began to form.

Russian academic theology, born in the 17th and 18th centuries following the models of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, continued to follow Western theology in the 19th century, even though operating fully independently. Russian academic theology was at that time of a high standard and great scholarly rigor. The schools were dominated by theological moralism, which was foreign to the Orthodox tradition, but alongside it a move was made to return to the tradition and spirit of the Church Fathers.

The 19th century was a victory parade of science in Europe. The 19th century was the century of technological advances and unprecedented economic and social change. It was a celebration of liberalism and individualism. Radical changes took place in society, and it was thought that religion's heyday was over.

The Catholic Church declared it had found the solution to the social problem when, after a protracted battle against modern ideas, it prevailed in maintaining the Christian state. A similar movement was taking place in the Protestant Churches from the bottom up, but only rarely did it have anything to do with the workers' movement. A similar development took place slightly later as part of industrialization in Russia. Two important theologians in this development were A. Gapon and G. Petrov. The state strongly resisted the Church's advances into social matters, and the Orthodox Church could not follow the path forged by the Western churches. The intensive social development that began in the second third of the 19th century was far more significant for the Orthodox Church. The action was led by the Slavophiles. At that time, philosophy of religion and social mobility were advanced. Newspapers fuelled social discourse in the second half of the 19th century, and a leadership with democratic ideas proved a new challenger – one with a religious outlook - against the prevailing social structure. In a short period of time, Russian philosophy of religion gave birth to the tradition of Christian social thought, and presented the Orthodox tradition using modern concepts. Through its political activity, the Orthodox Church's social work involved launching many of Alexander II's reforms, the most important of which was the freeing of the serfs.

The anthropological and ethical crisis that the First World War and its horrors symbolized led to Christianity having to reassess its activities and methods in a changed world.

In Russia, this anthropological crisis also included revolution, civil war, the wreckage of a thousand-year political stability, the victory parade of a godlessly bloody age, and mass emigration.

Typical representatives of the era are the philosophers who, according to their own words, progressed from Marxism to idealism. The leaders of the movement were Bulgakov and Berdyaev.

At the beginning of the 20th century, philosophers of religion and theologians joined forces. They continued to collaborate in exile. An excellent example is the establishing of the so-called "Paris School". The Paris School influenced Orthodox theological thinking and, in some cases, also influenced Catholic theology. The Paris School also gave the Orthodox Church a significant stake in the fostering of ecumenical dialogue.

The principles of 21st century academic theology have been the subject of critical examination. Above all, the following points have been critiqued:

a. naturalism in its different forms, ontology in philosophy, positivism in scientific philosophy, determinism based on the laws of nature in the natural sciences, when projected onto societal relationships, led to the fatalistic totalitarianism of social laws.

b. the transformation of God into an impersonal, abstract Good.

c. the concept, foreign to Orthodox theology, of the "natural human" based on the laws of nature, which has been adopted without critique by the Western Churches.

d. individualism in a person-centric humanism.

e. the legalistic exteriorizing of God's commandments, the formalizing of the appearance of the Christian life and its atrophying to an outward obedience to Christ's laws.

f. the rational reduction of the moral aspects of the Church's heritage into a separate ethical system.

g. the separation of ethics from ontology, the experience of a moral and living faith from morality, the Church's life of the sacraments from the aspiration towards ascetic perfection, and the exchanging of the experience of the lived life for moralism and moral demagogy.

III Philosophers

19th Century

F. M. Dostoyevsky

Dostoyevsky's main subject was the antinomy of a person's freedom. It is only possible to limit freedom by denying freedom – or, in this case, one's self.

A person's reason inverts will. For some, freedom is violence and tyranny, or it casts a person into slavery and desire. Freedom is good (righteous) only in love, and on the other hand, love is possible only when connected with freedom, in freely loving one's neighbor. The Grand Inquisitor is above all a victim of neighborly love that is non-free, other, and does not respect even the smallest freedom.

Freedom can only be truly realized through love and brotherhood. Therein lies the secret of social relations and the Church, of what love and brotherhood in Christ is. Only in the Church and in Christ do people truly become brethren and only in Christ is there no need to fear violence or fanaticism, only in Christ are people not a danger to one another.

In his works, Dostoyevsky takes as his starting point the problematics of early French socialism. Having experienced its temptations, he demonstrated how dangerous freedom and equality are, if people are not joined in brotherhood.

During his exile and forced labor, Dostoyevsky learned of the power evil has over people which runs counter to optimistic humanism. He also learned how terrible interpersonal interactions can be if conducted under duress. For him, prison was merely an extreme phenomenon of socialism or a similar social ideal. In *Notes*

from Underground, Dostoyevsky flagrantly exposes the dark side to the socialist utopia. The work condemns both socialistic determinism and individualism.

A. S. Khomyakov

Khomyakov considered social relations as a qualitative rather than quantitative concept tied to a single place or time.

People are called to union, but not to unanimity in itself, but unanimity in the Church, i.e., in Christ and the Holy Spirit. Unanimity is proof of truth. The value of unanimity lies in that it testifies without distortion about grace, the presence of the Holy Spirit without which unanimity would be impossible. Christians do not therefore become "catholic" because they belong to a large group of believers, but because they are partakers in grace.

To Khomyakov, social relations do not mean societality or sectarianism. According to Khomyakov, social relations are a divine, rather than human, aspect of the Church. "The teaching of the Church is not in the hands of a single person or set of individuals, but in the hands of God's living Spirit in the entity of the Church." A moral connection is a human condition and guarantee of the connection created by the Spirit."

20th Century

N. A. Berdyaev

Central idea is the supremacy of freedom over essence.

The supremacy of the person over society gave Berdyaev the opportunity to oppose the total subjugation of the individual to societal-utilitarian goals and to declare personal freedom a self-evident right.

According to Berdyaev, humans are not free, despite having heroically fought for their freedom throughout history. At most they manage to transfer their non-freedom from one state to another. According to Berdyaev, they manage to pass through different phases, but their fate is always a tragic one. People have created culture, nations, national unity and social structure, but they have become

slaves to all of these. Now people strive to control irrational societal powers. As a consequence of human actions, an organized society has been formed, and thanks to technological advances people can control life and nature. But at the same time people become slaves to the organized society and to technology. Society has become a machine that has enslaved humanity and, unawares, people themselves have become machines. Berdyaev's concern over humanity's endless slavery made him aware of the liberating and pseudo-liberating ideas that were floating around social consciousness at the time. Berdyaev was first a follower of Marxist social philosophy, which he soon rejected. Berdyaev called Bolshevism an "unprecedented tyranny" and exposed its cannibalistic nature. Bolshevism was founded on antihumanistic principles; it was antidemocratic and denied individual freedom and human rights, and constantly sacrificed people and their interests to the insatiable machinery of the state.

Fr. Sergei Bulgakov

Bulgakov was originally a Marxist, but in his attempts to delve deeper into Marx's theory he became disillusioned with it and moved from Marxism to idealism.

One of his earlier works is "The Philosophy of Economy" and its subject matter deals closely with social ethics. In this work he argues against the determinism of socialist and economic ideas.

Economics is an area of universal solidary creativity, a process of expanding freedom, a humanizing of nature, and growth of life realized through culture or work.

Alienation, which plays an important part in Marx's ideology, is the consequence of sin and the suppression of human creativity.

Fr. Georges Florovsky

Florovsky at first studied Russia's special position as belonging simultaneously to Europe and to Asia, but later focused on studying patrology, church history, and Christian thought. His catchphrase "forward to the Church Fathers" became the motto of neopatristics, a field of theology held in high regard by modern Orthodoxy. He suggested that a "neopatristic synthesis" should be achieved based on the profound and sincere adoption of the theology of the Church Fathers, but expressed through the language and methods of modern philosophy.

V. N. Lossky

V. N. Lossky was a prominent advocate of neopatristics. He formulated the outlines for neopatristic synthesis.

A central factor in Lossky's theology is the endeavor to find answers to modern questions in the heritage of the Church. It is the Church in particular that is able to provide genuine answers to anthropological crises. Lossky is considered the father of the Orthodox Church's modern doctrine of the person.

God is superterrestrial with regard to creation. Similarly, God is superterrestrial with regard to human nature, which is created. The superterrestriality of God's image to human nature means that God's image can never be a part of nature or its composition. Humans are created in God's image, and this, Lossky argued, brought out the basic unit of human nature – the person. He writes, "If we wish to characterize an individual, we catalog individual traits, characteristics, that are encountered in other individuals as well, and which are never wholly unique, because they belong to nature in general. In the end we realize that the most precious thing about a man, that which makes him *him*, cannot be defined, because there is nothing in human nature which belongs exclusively to the person, which is always unique."

The Church Fathers did not clearly formulate their doctrine of the self, but ideas that are important to the anthropology of Eastern Christianity are triadology and Christology. For this reason even Lossky's concept of the self is based on the Church's doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the essence of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The unity of the Trinity and the separation of the persons belong on the same ontological level. The Church Fathers purposely used two, almost synonymous words, hypostasis and being (ousia). Using these terms, both unity and separateness – mutual limitation – can be explained. Hypostasis is separate from ousia, and is not limited by it. It has the same status of being as if hypostasis and ousia were one. The separation does not result in a "second being" (ousia) (then God would be a combination of different ousiai).

Lossky reminds us that the doctrine of human nature developed at the same time as Christological heresies were being combated. When the Church Fathers succeeded in defeating the heresy of Apollinaris, they clearly demonstrated that human nature is not an element of nature itself. If this were the case, then this being of nature would have to be separated from the human nature of the Word-God made flesh. They also demonstrated that in becoming flesh, the Word-God

took on human nature in its entirety, but did not receive a human self, since in the opposite case this would have led to the duality of Christ's person. According to Cyril of Alexandria, who fought against Nestorianism, the subject of Christ's birth and death was a divine person (The Son, Word-God), not divine nature. If the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity had been born from the divine essence (ousia), then the whole Trinity would have become flesh. If, however, the human person was derived from human nature, then we would have to acknowledge, that Christ's person was not one. Then the Word-God would have been made flesh in one concrete human, and would save only one specified human. At the Council of Chalcedon the terminology of triadology was applied to Christology. Because the person does not stem from nature, it is possible to simultaneously express Christ's oneness, and the duality of His nature (divine and human), which are inextricably, indivisibly and immutably combined in the hypostasis of Christ.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from this regarding a human being's person is that the human person, which identifies with God's image in humanity, is not limited to human nature. Lossky assures us, "It is impossible for us to form a concept of the human person, and we will have to content ourselves with saying: 'person' signifies the irreducibility of man to his nature –'irreducibility' and not 'something irreducible' or 'something which makes man irreducible to his nature' precisely because it cannot be a question here of 'something' distinct from 'another nature' but of someone who is distinct from his own nature."

The doctrine of the person as presented by Lossky is therefore closely linked to a man's societal existence, and therefore to social ethics.

The doctrine of the person was developed by the Greek theologian and philosopher of religion Christos Yannaras, and by his fellow Greek, Metropolitan John Zizioulas. Both these men were important in shaping the Orthodox conception of the human person in the philosophical discourse of the 20th century.

Christos Yannaras

Christos Yannaras, like many of the 20th century Russian philosophers of religion, was first involved with leftist politics but later found faith. In his works on the philosophy of religion, he polemisizes Martin Heidegger's philosophical principles.

As we know, Heidegger in his analysis of the problem of human existence, paid especial attention to the fact to that the subject as conceived by Plato had, in

modern times, been reinterpreted as an object. The primacy of the subject in consciousness and culture leads us to consider being externally to the principles of being, and leads us to a strategy for controlling being. The existing world turns out to be against the individual making use of it. The flexibility of the subject in the conceptual process by which it becomes the measure of all things, leads to the primacy of individualistic anthrocentrism. The logic of nihilism, in a paradoxical way, includes the idea of man as a central being. During the reign of technology, people become part of the production and they transform from being the rulers of existence to unsubstantiated material.

On the one hand, Yannaras agrees with Heidegger's assessment of the history of Western ontology. However, unlike Heidegger, Yannaras joins with Foucault - who declared the subject dead –in endorsing the idea of the subject's priority over being and considers it to be a positive thing, the priority of the person over being.

"God's personal existence is the perfect and complete expression of being. God's essence (ousia) or energy is not focused on being, but is a mode of His personal existence, the image of being. God's person is the hypostasis of being. God concentrates His being specifically in personal existence, freedom from all definitions of essence and nature. When Moses asked God for His name, so that he might tell the Israelites, he received the answer, "I am the One who is". God identifies genuine existence, the reality of being, through His own hypostasis. This means that divine being is not an ontological reality that presupposes His own being or defines it. On the contrary, God's personal hypostasis is the complete and perfect expression of His own being."

Yannaras, in his own doctrine of the self, accepts the crisis of ontology that has led to ontologization, the polarization of subject and object and at the same time the death of being and the subject and the separation of their hypostases in two philosophical schools, namely naturalism and individualism.

Metropolitan John Zizioulas, having drifted away from Lossky's doctrine of the person and in fashioning his theological thinking, bears in mind the changes wrought on European philosophy by Heidegger's ideas and the philosophy of dialogue. The philosophy of dialogue and the philosophy of *drugoi* are closely related to Emmanuel Levinas' ideas about kenotic ethics.

John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamon

One of the most important themes in the work of Metropolitan John Zizioulas is the question of the limits of man's freedom.

He writes that, "according to Western philosophy, ethical freedom is satisfied with the simple chance of freedom. The man who can choose from several possible options is truly free. However, this kind of freedom is limited, because first there must be options available. The most extreme and harsh option is his own existence. How can man be considered wholly free, if he can only accomplish what is possible within the limitations of his existence? Dostoyevsky portrays the full tragedy of this conundrum in his novel *Demons*.

One of the characters of the book, Kirillov, says, "Everyone who wants the supreme freedom must dare to kill himself. He who dares to kill himself has found out the secret of the deception. There is no freedom beyond; that is all, and there is nothing beyond. He who dares kill himself is God. Now everyone can do so that there shall be no God and shall be nothing." Kirillov's words express the most tragic aspect of the aspirations of the person. He seeks a way out of the inevitability of existence, seeks the opportunity to exist of his own free will.

Metropolitan John Zizioulas stresses the serious internal limitations of social ethics. The existence of others as well as the law and the norms of social ethics limit a person's freedom. Zizioulas says that, the "'other' becomes a threat to the person", what Sartre calls "adom" and "falling".

Metropolitan John notes with sadness that humanism is not able to confirm individuality.

The created man being cannot escape the inevitability of his own existence. The person cannot be just an earthly or human reality.

If there is no God, then there is no person. But God is also a prisoner of His own nature, if He is defined as absolute and unchanging.

God, however, is not a prisoner of His own nature, nor can he be defined through nature. When we say that God exists, we are not limiting God's personal freedom to His existence (for God's existence is not an ontological inevitability for God). We describe God's being with His freedom. If God exists, He exists, because the Father, who through His love can freely give birth to the Son and send forth the Spirit, exists. Thus God as a person, the hypostasis of the Father, makes the one

divine nature what it is: one God. For this reason the principle of autocracy is important in the Orthodox religion. It refers to the autocracy of God. The unity of the Trinity is not connected to personless nature, but to the person of the Father. The individualistic impenetrability typical of society does not exist in God. In giving birth to the Son the Father leaves Himself and is in the Son. In sending forth the Holy Spirit, the Father is in him. And similarly, the Son, having been born of the Father is in the Father and this applies to the Holy Spirit as well. In this case the three persons are one in life and love. (Unity – *koinonia* is one of the basic tenets of Metropolitan John Zizioulas' theology.)

If the foundation of God's ontological freedom was in God's uncreated nature, then human beings, who are created, would have no hope or chance of being a person in the same way as God, so a human could not be an authentic person. The foundation of God's ontological freedom is not found in his nature, however, but in his existence or in the image of existence, according to which he exists as a Divine nature. Thanks to this a human being can be a genuine person despite the radical differences between human nature and God's nature. People should realize themselves in relation to God and to other people. Sin has damaged human nature on a basic level and because of this the human person is only revealed through nature.

Sin is the reason that society is internally broken.

One can only obtain a genuine person through the Church. In baptism, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, a new person – not biological but "ecclesiastical" – is born. This birth is truly free of the conditions and divisions set by nature.

Metropolitan John Zizioulas, like many other Orthodox theologians, argued that the Church is an ideal society, because only in the Church can the personal and the communal be in harmony together. Similarly, the total freedom of the person and the shared life of all persons is in harmony in the Church. Harmony continues to exist between the manifold crowd of unique individuals and manifold oneness. The union between one and many that is achieved in the Eucharist, has helped the Church to see the mystery of the Trinity in the essence of the Church. The Holy Trinity in particular, where natural life and three persons are one, is an example of man's renewed existence. Originally, people were created for unity, *koinonia*. The essence of humanity, broken by sin, is repaired in Christ, God's true Son, where genuine humanity appeared above all as an image of existence to come. In Him all are one without losing the identity of their persons, and one is many according to the example of the Holy Trinity.

Alexander Schmemann

Church and Peace

According to Fr. Alexander, the Church is an eschatological community that even in the current historical reality is joined with the kingdom of God and testifies about it in this world.

The Church's eschatological beliefs can be summarized as follows: each individual Christian is not of the world. This is not a negative thing, but a positive thing, because it means a connection with the kingdom of God. It is a question of spiritual reality, which the Holy Spirit has announced and is granted now and in the future. The symbol of this is the Church, which is present in this world.

According to Fr. Alexander, in the Early Christian world view this world did not mean the secular world. This world meant space not nature and for that reason there is eschatological tension between the old and the new. The tension can be born as a new creation in Christ. Eschatology is Christ's attitude to the world, His presence and His activity in the world.

The Church as an institution exists only to serve the transition from this world to the next. The institution of the Church belongs to this world, but its goals are in the next. The Church does not seek power, nor does it have worldly interests that it would fight for. The whole world – all of creation – belongs to the Church, because the Church belongs to Christ, who is Lord of all creation, and creation is therefore the focus of the Church's work. Creation is not, however, the property of the Church, but the Church's mission is to make present the kingdom that is not of this world.

Fr. Alexander assumed that in the West, the relationship between the Church and the state was originally established on juridical grounds between the two institutes or powers.

In the East, the Church did not originally represent power but a sacramental organism, whose mission was to declare God's kingdom as truth and grace and to fulfill its task as the temple of Christ's body and the Holy Spirit.

In the Middle Ages the Early Church's concept of God's kingdom as an antinomical existence in the present and future worlds was no longer in use. Eschatology became futuristic and God's kingdom became a reality that is only coming but does not yet exist, for example, as new life in the Holy Spirit or

as the true presaging of new creation. Before secularization, Christian thought pervaded the entire Western world. During this time the eschatology, that not even the Church required, changed in secular consciousness to different development processes and the like.

IV The Compatibility of Social Ethics

Orthodox theologians and scholars are generally critical of the principles of social ethics. They find the conventionality, secularism, narrow horizons, and pragmatism to be problematic, in addition to the narrowing of the person into a personless social communication and the supremacy of deeds over motives. They also find attempts to make social ethics a universal system to be suspicious and unjustified. Additionally, the existence of societal ethics is connected with secularization, and reflects the problems inherent in the structures of modern society.

K. Kostjuk, a scholar of Christianity's societal concept, invites the Church to be active in social-ethical matters:

"For centuries, people's position in society has been considered according to a traditional societal model. In a modern pluralistic society everything is reversed: a person cannot belong to all of the various institutional structures; people are so badly mixed up in social relations that they cannot be considered independent beings. An individual's experience is random and diverse. Traditional society was stable, modern society is constantly changing. Principles of development and modernization and the societal instruments set up to enable them change society into a target of intensive societal development. Moralizing is replaced with a structural change that a reasonable person adapts to independently. The duty of Christian social ethics and the Church is to act as mediator and affect these institutional changes. Through societal changes ethical consciousness changes as well. In modern society, traditional ethics is only one among many options. Through social ethics the Church's moral sermon can be transformed into something universal and its societal scope and power can be restored."

The relevance of the position of the Church to the debate on social ethics can be justified from a traditionalist stance as well. "The Church is not indifferent to society's values and order. On the contrary the Church considers them to be important and has a positive attitude towards them. This is clearly observable in the ethical guidelines found in the New Testament. Especially instructive is

Paul's advice to the Philippians: "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Philippians 4:8). Thus the moral guidelines informing societal life are closely linked with the message of the Gospels. The same is true of how Christianity relates to existing social institutions. The Church accepts marriage, family and the excercizing of power. What is new is Christ, who is the central person, the judge, and who gives all things their value. A Christian enters marriage "in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39), is subservient to the state in God's name (Romans 13:1-7), and examines his or her social and societal relationships in Christ (Galatians 3:28).

EUROPE'S VALUES

Rev. Dr Kimmo Kääriäinen

This paper examines the type of operating environment churches in modern Europe work in. It concentrates on the last theme of the doctrinal discussions' title, "the context of modern society", from the viewpoint of values and moral outlook. As we are dealing with the bilateral doctrinal discussions between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, we will examine changes in values and moral outlook in Europe in general as well as in Finland and Russia. This examination is based on empirical research results that describe the changes in attitudes during the last decades. This gives us an opportunity to discuss mutual challenges.

The Value Base of the European Union

The cultures of antiquity have created the basis for European values: Athens (reason), Rome (justice) and Jerusalem (mercy). They have decisively moulded European cultural, social and political history and they continue to influence greatly the formation of the identity of European peoples. Though Europe is increasingly a multi-faith continent, Christianity has had a central influence as the base for European culture and values. European churches have together emphasized this significance and have tried to ensure that this tradition is taken into account in European decision making.

The heritage of antiquity is the basis for many international agreements ratified by the European nations (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, The United Nations Charter, etc.). This heritage is also seen in the official documents of the European Union that define the common value base of the Union. The European Community was founded in 1957 through the Treaty of Rome. The primary objective was the development of economic co-operation between the member states. In the background was also a desire to create structures that would support peace and prevent the recurrence of events that happened in the Second World War. Besides the economic objectives, the Treaty of Rome already exhibited the common value base of the Community. It emphasized the equality of the sexes, solidarity as well as values related to the environment. The treaty also emphasized the importance of the members' common culture and community.

With the Maastricht Treaty (1992) new forms of co-operation between member states were adopted in, e.g., defense, law and domestic affairs. By adding the co-operation between governments to the existing Community, the Maastricht Treaty created the European Union (EU). The introductory part of the Treaty describes the Union's value base in which the member states *confirm their attachment to liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law, ... desiring to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions.*

The EU's draft Constitution contained the same value base as previous agreements. According to it, the Union's basic values are respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including rights for minorities. The second part of the draft Constitution (EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights) declares that the Union is aware of its spiritual and ethical heritage. The Charter of Fundamental Rights also stressed the importance of the local culture and traditions of member states.

The Status of the Churches and Religious Communities

The intergovernmental conference that convened in Amsterdam in 1997 decided to register a declaration of the position of churches and religious communities in the EU Charter (Maastricht II). The final document of the conference contained a declaration of the EU's relationship to the churches operating in the member states:

The Union respects and does not restrict the national legal status of churches and religious communities or organizations.

Recording the status of churches and religious organizations in an intergovernmental agreement can be interpreted as a change in a way of thinking in the EU, which was previously mostly known only as an economic and political community. The Amsterdam agreement, however, did not change the status of churches in the member states, since it started from the point of view that decisions on the status of churches are made on a national level according to the subsidiarity principle at the lowest possible judicial level. This principle creates an opportunity for national solutions. It guarantees that the legislation concerning religious communities is contained as a part of the member states' legislations. In this way it gives space for special religious and cultural features of different countries.

As with the Amsterdam agreement, the EU's Constitutional Treaty (article 52) guaranteed churches and religious communities a status in accordance with national legislation. The Treaty also included a paragraph on the dialogue between the Union and churches: *the Union takes part in open and regular dialogue with churches and organizations acknowledging their identity and special mission.*

Discussions were held while preparing the EU Constitution on whether the status of Christianity should be mentioned in the Constitution. Especially some Catholic member states proposed that Christianity should be separately mentioned in the introduction of the Constitution. The issue arose again in June 2004 in the Brussels summit where the draft Constitution was accepted. Following a suggestion made by Poland, the ministers once more discussed mentioning Christianity in the introduction of the Constitution. Ireland's proposal for a preface was adopted as a compromise: *member states take their inspiration from Europe's cultural, religious and humanist traditions from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable human rights as well as liberty, democracy, equality and the rule of law.*

The EU Constitution has not come into force because its supporters were left in the minority in both the French and Dutch referendums. In some of the Union's member states the ratification process has continued normally but on the whole there is an ongoing "time-out". Under the circumstances, churches can renew their participation in the discussions on the Constitution and the value base of the EU.

Modernization and individualism

Viewed from a longer historical perspective the status of Christianity and churches as a European moral authority has changed significantly. A more or less unified moral code that defined human life was prevalent in pre-modern society. The Church and the clergy represented God and His will. They also used God as an authority that legitimized the Church's moral teachings. Social integration was founded on this moral authority. When the church and state were strongly interrelated, the unified culture was even stronger. This, however, did not mean that everyone would have followed the official norms. A severe system of sanctions suggests that moral unity was not voluntary. The unified culture's morality was largely based on a mandatory system of norms, the justification of which was largely religious. Even so, it was impossible to control everything in the unified culture. Though there was a common moral code on an ideological level, there was not one on an individual level in the sense that everyone would

have adopted the same moral views. Individualism was already showing in the unified culture.

Phenomena related to modernization have increasingly worn down the power of the churches - also as a moral authority - and have strengthened individualism. Modernization signifies the fundamental changes in economics, technology, culture and politics that started with the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution that began in England. In economics, modernization had connections to industrialization, specialization resulting from division of labor, the evolution of national and international markets, the acceleration of economic growth and the decrease in the percentage of people working in agriculture. Technological progress contained even more complex technology being developed for production and the distribution of commodities, the emphasis on applied knowledge, the creation of a technological infrastructure and the control of the environment through knowledge and technology. Cultural modernization involved an emphasis on education, the rationalization of society and the birth of consumerism. Secularization and the privatization of religious and moral values was also connected to it. Political modernization, however, refers to an increased participation in politics, the development of bureaucracy and the birth of various interest groups. At the same time this development is a prerequisite for the birth of the nation-state.

Modernization and increasing individualism are connected to each other. With increasing individualism is meant the social and historical processes where values, beliefs, stances and behaviour are more and more founded upon individual choices and are less reliant on tradition and social institutions. The division of labour, the welfare state, increased education, etc., brought about by modernization embody the opportunities of the individual and strengthen their autonomy. In this way modernization has created the prerequisites for individualism. Values are no longer defined through institutionalized religion but are based on individual choices. Self-improvement and personal happiness are the leading principles.

The increase in individualism has met with various reactions. The more pessimistic view observes that the negative side-effects of individualism are consumerism, privatism, hedonism and narcissism. Traditional values have been replaced by subjectivism. The more optimistic view, however, observes that increased individualism can engender to a greater responsibility towards the community: the individual needs personal contacts and activity for the common good. Another positive aspect is that it emphasizes the individual's cognitive and affective development. The optimistic views therefore stress that modernization offers an opportunity to develop new communal values such as equality and democracy.

From this point of view the individualism increased by modernization does not necessarily lead to hedonism and egoism.

Modernization and Secularization

Modernization and secularization are connected to each other. The majority of sociologists that have studied secularization agree that secularization is connected to modernization in that the further modernization goes, the further secularization goes as well. Features of modernization that foster secularization especially include industrialization, urbanization and migration which have eroded the traditional way of life.

Classical secularization theory has three paradigms: segregation, the decline of religion and privatization. Segregation means a process where for different areas of life (management, economics, law, education, etc.) their own institutional structures will gradually appear. When social segregation increases, the possibility that a certain unified value base would bind people together decreases. Morality is considered to have changed both as an institution and as a system of norms because there are different and competing ethical paradigms on offer instead of a common moral code. The decline in religion refers to both decline in religious beliefs as well as of practices. Privatization means the change of religion to a more private sphere of life and that religious opinions are more self constructed. Privatization can also be described as religious individualism.

Since the 1980s increasing criticism has been leveled against the secularization paradigm. The criticism has paid attention to secularization theory's ideological linkages, its false view of "the religious past" and that the theory does not fit the rise of new religions and fundamentalism. Also, the theory's ability to be generalized globally has been questioned. The rapid rise of religion in many ex-socialist countries since the late 1980s has challenged traditional secularization theory as well.

Many researchers have noted that secularization should not be regarded as a unified theory but the validity of each of its sections - segregation, decline of religion and privatization - should be tested individually.

In most European countries the segregation thesis has been demonstrated as valid and it is seen as a structural trend in modern society. Society's different areas, the

state and economy as well as cultural and institutional areas (science, education, law and art) have achieved their own institutional autonomy.

The second thesis of secularization theory – that religious beliefs and practices have decreased – is, on the other hand, both theoretically and empirically more problematic. Theoretical problems are caused by what is considered religion and what dimensions of religion are studied and how different dimensions (membership, participation, beliefs, experiences, etc.) are to be emphasized. There is also no global empirical evidence for the thesis. From a global viewpoint the development after the Second World War has been that religious traditions have either somewhat increased in popularity or have maintained their status. Counter-examples are found only in Europe and even there mostly in Western Europe. In many Eastern European, ex-socialist countries both religious beliefs and practices have strongly increased.

Regarding religious beliefs and practices, Europe has both very secular and very religious countries. The degree of modernization is not a sufficient explanation for this. Also the traditional denomination of different countries does not explain the differences: for example among the Catholic countries there are both very secular and very religious countries. Similar differences can be seen with traditionally Orthodox and Protestant countries. Thus, decline in religion cannot be thought of as a structural trend related to modernization. The situation in different countries must be assessed separately and their unique histories must be taken into account.

The privatization of religion is noticeable in several European countries in the sense that religious views are ever more self-constructed and are not in accordance with teachings of the main churches. Individuals form their own beliefs and practices. This does not, however, mean the disappearance of religion as mandated by secularization theory; it means the transformation of religion. This is shown by, among other things, that while there is opposition to religion as represented by the clerical authorities, there is also more talk about "spirituality" and influences are taken from New Age religiosity.

The social role of churches and religious communities has not become marginalized as is required by privatization theory. There are many instances in which religion is not restricted to private life but instead strongly affects society. There is demand for religions' public operation as secular ideologies have lost their status. Religion's new appearance in public has happened in three ways. Firstly, religions have mobilized to defend a traditional way of life and its values. This has appeared, for example, as statements on the legislation of abortion.

The measures of religions have forced modern societies to reflect publicly and collectively on its own normative solutions. Secondly, religions have criticized the operating principles of capitalist markets and have demanded society to review and regulate the impersonal market mechanisms to ensure that they take into account personal, social and ecological viewpoints. International religions have also noted that "the common good" can only be defined globally and that therefore the borders of modern nation-states are not binding. Thirdly, religions stress "the common good" in contrast to individualist modern liberal theories that reduce the common good to a sum of individual choices.

Also, the rise in the importance of Islam restricts the privatization of religion in Europe. In the 1970s, western sociologists assumed that Muslims who moved to Europe would quickly become secularized, or they would at least understand, like Europeans do, that religion (including Islam) is a private matter. Muslim identity was presumed to be built more on an ethnic and linguistic base. However, the situation changed in the 1980s when a significant portion of Muslim immigrants did not accept this kind of model. Governmental and local authorities noticed that migration issues had to take into account "the Islamic factor." Muslims are about five percent of the population of Europe (including Russia). Quantitatively the greatest number of Muslims are in Russia, France and Germany. The significance of Islam in Europe will continue to increase because of both migration and the higher birthrate of the Muslim population compared to the rest of the population.

Moral fragmentation

The development of modernization is seen to have led not only to religious but also to moral privatization. The modern "mature" phase, the postmodern one, is called the time of individualism which makes possible a far greater freedom of moral choice than previously. In the same way there are numerous choices available in the "market" of religions, and there is also a greater supply of moral principles and individuals feel free to choose from several available values and to use them to form their own moral principles.

Significant changes have occurred in European values over the last decades. Norms related to traditional political, religious, social and sexual ethics have

lost their status. A comparison of different countries in the *World Values*[13] survey shows that feelings of wellbeing and safety have a clear influence on the set of values: the feeling of safety from increased welfare has reduced the need for rigid norms. This can be seen especially in those generations that have grown up in relatively stable conditions. They are more ready than older generations to accept a deviation from the traditional norm.

Behind the change in attitudes is also the change in the function of traditional norms. This especially applies to the norms of family and sexual ethics. Although the family is still in reality the primary influence for a balanced childhood, the social function of the family has changed. It is no longer the production and subsistence unit it used to be. Family used to be a central production unit, the child's survival in life was decisively dependent on his or her parents and likewise the parents' survival at the end of their lives was dependent on their children. Now work is usually done outside of the family and the welfare state has taken over many functions that previously were done by family members. Traditional gender roles and ideas related to them have also changed with the modernization of society. Women are working more outside the home.

Younger generations are significantly more permissive towards divorce, homosexuality, abortion, sexual relationships outside of marriage, prostitution and euthanasia. Older generations, on the other hand, generally tend to defend the traditional idea of family and feel negatively about phenomena that are incompatible with it.

Although moral pluralism has increased, this does not mean that any values whatsoever could become prevalent. The basis of a pluralist and democratic society is the freedom of thought and choice – though only so far that one's own freedom does not violate the freedoms and choices of others. What are unanimously accepted in a democracy are the frames in which the good life is to be led in and in which others are allowed to lead their lives as they best see fit.

The basic idea of a democratic society can be called a "consensus society." It represents specific common values that tie the society together. It is called

13 *World Values* surveys were conceived in the 1970s when a few Catholic researchers became interested in studying people's world views. Special attention was paid to the researches being possible in various countries and in a method that would work with different cultures and that the results could be comparable. Several countries from Europe and outside Europe have taken part in the research. On the part of the whole of Europe, the usable material stretches to the year 2000. 31 European countries participated in the year 2000 *World Values* survey. The material is collected through personal interviews during the years 1999-2000.

consensus because the common values have been achieved through reflecting on various values and often through compromises as well. Consensus also means that the agreements are not final. It is often a question of political pragmatism where the integration of society is not based on common substantial values but to a more or less well-functioning system that guarantees everyone the same rights and duties.

Morality is often categorized into personal and social morals. Some norms and values are by their nature such that they influence all common structures; others are limited to a personal space, in other words are a case of norms and values that regulate the individual's freedom of choice within a certain social structure. Traditionally, questions dealing with the beginning and end of life and sexual ethics have been considered to be personal morals. Today, however, it is difficult to speak of purely personal moral questions. For example, abortion and euthanasia are not personal moral questions in the sense that everyone could decide for themselves how to act, but both require society in the background to provide legislation on these issues. It is also difficult to talk of questions dealing solely with societal morals because the structures and institutions of society both enable and restrict individual choices. For example, tax fraud is not purely a personal or societal moral issue. Individuals pay taxes, but taxes are collected so that social structures like education and health care can be ensured. To avoid these conceptual problems one can speak of problems of *structural morality* and *freedom of choice morality.* The former deal with moral questions that relate to society as structures. Solving these questions sets limits on individuals' freedom that they have in society and the frame within which individuals can find solutions to their own questions. The latter questions deal with humans as individuals. Individuals' solutions are formed by society's moral infrastructure. Solutions that differ from each other do not, however, threaten society's infrastructure. Although values and moral concepts have become shattered, the process does have its limits. The *World Values* survey does not support the idea that morality is disintegrating and that moral diversity is continually increasing. The survey does point to significant differences between European countries on regarding moral perceptions and religion.

Moral Perceptions of Finns in the Years 1981-2000

By taking polls using questions that measure moral perceptions it is possible to examine the changes in Finnish attitudes since the beginning of the 1980s. The

percentage of those who think some deed is wrong has decreased in this period, but at the same time there is a clear fluctuation on moral perceptions.

Table 1. The acceptability of various deeds in the years 1981-2000. The percentage of Finns who would never accept the deed (on a scale of 1-10 the value 1 "never acceptable") (%).

	1981	1986	1990	1996	2000
Tax fraud	66	63	41	57	53
Taking bribes	84	81	70	83	80
Using public transport without paying	82	75	53	62	50
Homosexuality	56	53	33	38	28
Prostitution	65	54	31	38	44
Abortion	30	22	10	19	11
Divorce	18	11	5	8	3
Euthanasia	42	29	10	16	17
Suicide	69	59	33	48	40

Significant changes have happened in the Finnish intellectual climate during the past twenty years. The changes have also reflected onto values and moral perceptions. A strongly growing economy in the 1980s strengthened individualism, efficiency and experience of being in control of one's life. At the same time, people began to treat more leniently many things that had previously been forbidden. The depression in the early 1990s quickly changed the atmosphere. Instead of control over one's life one was swept up in the current toward isolation, one went from taking effective action to pondering life's basic questions and from individuality to community. People preferred to seek safety as opposed to taking risks. With the depression, moral questions gained in importance. Partly it had to do with assigning guilt but for a large part it was also a true discussion about whose interests should be placed first in society's decision-making: the weak or the strong, the present or the future generations. Striving for justice and

the right life was emphasized in this discussion. After 1990, demands for a high social morality became more vocal in Finnish attitudes. A "tight line" began to be taken regarding many moral questions in comparison to the late 1980s. Trust in the Church increased, withdrawing from the Church decreased and more people rejoined the Church.

However, individuality began to regain strength after the mid 1990s. Functionality, activity, creativity and the meaning of new ideas were favored. At the same time, attitudes became more fragmented. Many values and stances were no longer common to all Finns and numerous groups had their own values and stances. The traditional grouping of age, gender or class was no longer manifest, but instead there appeared numerous sub-groups, e.g., among the youth.

In 1981 moral stances were for the most part more stern than later on. The year 1990 represents a clearly more liberal viewpoint. 1990 was still representative of the economic upturn of the 1980s where economic values and individuality were strongly emphasized. Tax fraud, taking bribes and using public transport without paying were clearly felt to be more acceptable than earlier. The prevalent individualism was also seen with stances towards prostitution, abortion, euthanasia and suicide.

1996 was still a year with an uncertain atmosphere – despite the economy growing and with that a general sense of financial optimism. The depression years had changed stances toward a more social direction. The end of an era and the start of a new one caused a sense of uncertainty that made people seek refuge in values deemed permanent. Tough times only strengthened this reaction which could be seen especially in "depression morality." Tax fraud was found to be much more condemnable than in 1990, as was taking bribes and traveling on public transportation without paying. The sterner attitude was also clearly seen in relation to abortion and suicide. Coming into the year 2000 most of the moral perceptions included in the questionnaire were taking a more liberal turn again.

Changes in moral stances seem to have happened due to social transformations – largely in the way suggested by modernization theory. Finland in the 1990s was like a laboratory for observing changes in values. Finland and the nearby areas went through the central events that are considered to be causes of value changes: political upheaval, economic changes and technological innovations.

Russian Moral Perceptions in the Years 1991-2005

The changes that took place in Russia beginning in the late 1980s were on a completely different level of magnitude compared with Finland: a Soviet state built over decades collapses, the population halves and the country loses a third of its surface-area. Forced secularization ends and changes to freedom of religion. The Communist moral theory related to Soviet Marxism with its practical moral code loses its status. How are such radical changes reflected in moral perceptions? These changes can be viewed by comparing Russian stances on the acceptability of various deeds between 1991 and 2005.[14]

In almost all the questions the moral stances of Russians have become more lenient since 1991 (as well as 1993). In questions of social morality (structure morality) the changes have been especially noticeable regarding the question of taking bribes, purchasing stolen goods, demanding unneeded social welfare, tax fraud and traveling on public transportation without paying. One cause for these is that the social structure, social welfare and the taxation system has changed radically compared to the last year of Communist rule. In individual morality (freedom of choice morality) changes have happened especially in relation to homosexuality, sexual intercourse as a minor, sexual relationships outside marriage and in lying for one's own gain. Views on abortion, euthanasia and divorce have become somewhat stricter in the 2000s.

Two opposite processes have happened in Russia at the same time: the liberalization of moral stances and the significant strengthening of the status of religion and of religiosity.

14 Russia has been involved with the *World Values* surveys since 1990. The material on Russia is however deficient. In making a picture of the Russian situation, material collected by a comparable method is used from the last year of Communist rule in 1991 to 2005. The material was collected by Sociological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, since the mid 1990s the *CESSI* (*Institute for Comparative Social Research*). The material as a part of *Religion and Values After the End of the Communist Era*, a collaborative project between the Finnish Academy and the Russian Academy of Sciences. The material was collected through personal interviews in 1991, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002 and 2005 (N=1 500–2 800).

Table 2. The acceptability of various deeds in the years 1991-2005. The percentage of Russians who would never accept the deed (on a scale of 1-10 the value 1 "never acceptable") (%).

	1991	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005
Drug use	91	90	84	88	85	75
Unauthorized use of another's car	91	91	84	89	84	75
Driving under the influence	81	81	72	79	76	70
Homosexuality	83	81	72	68	65	62
Prostitution	74	77	63	64	61	61
Taking bribes	83	74	66	69	63	57
Suicide	61	56	53	58	56	57
Purchasing stolen property	77	62	57	59	53	47
Having sex when underaged	58	58	45	45	42	39
Demanding unneeded social welfare	59	52	47	48	38	36
Tax fraud	48	42	31	35	31	30
Euthanasia	43	35	30	19	23	28
Traveling on public transport without paying	50	37	23	26	25	27
Lying for one's own gain	46	34	32	29	25	27
A sexual relationship outside of marriage	46	37	36	34	28	26
Resisting the police	33	39	31	25	22	20
Abortion	18	14	12	11	14	22
Divorce	15	12	8	5	8	11

The Moral Perceptions of Russians, Finns and Europeans

How do the moral perceptions of Finns and Russians differ from each other and how do they compare with the European average?

Table 3. The acceptability of various deeds. The percentage of Russians, Finns and Europeans who would never accept the deed (on a scale of 1-10 the value 1 "never acceptable") (%).

	Russia (2005)	Finland (2000)	Europe (2000)
Drug use	75	76	75
Unauthorized use of another's car	75	81	84
Driving under the influence	70	81	-
Homosexuality	62	28	40
Prostitution	61	44	-
Taking bribes in official duties	57	80	70
Suicide	57	40	57
Underage sex	39	37	-
Demanding social welfare for which one is not eligible	36	49	58
Tax fraud, if opportunity presents itself	30	53	53
Euthanasia	28	17	29
Not pay in public transport	27	50	-
Lying for one's own gain	27	37	44
Extramarital sexual relationship	26	50	53
Abortion	22	11	27
Divorce	11	3	15

There is some similarity between Finnish and Russian moral perceptions. Like the Russians, the Finns have very negative attitudes toward drug use, unauthorized used of another's car and driving under the influence. The Finns are more permissive than the Russians toward abortion and divorce. Clear differences can also be found. In questions of social morals the Finns reject more strongly the taking of bribes, demanding unneeded social welfare, tax fraud and using public transportation without paying. The Finns also object more to lying for one's own gain. In questions of sexual ethics the Finns have a significantly more critical view than the Russians on extramarital affairs. However, the greatest difference between Finns and Russians is in how homosexuality is viewed: two thirds of Russians feel that homosexuality is always wrong, in Finland only a quarter of the population feels so.

A clear similarity between the Finns and the Russians is that the differences between generations are similar. For the majority of moral issues the younger generations are more liberal than the older generations.

In comparing Finland and Russia to the European average the Finns are more conservative only when it comes to taking bribes. In most questions the Finns are close to the average. Finns are clearly more liberal in attitudes toward homosexuality, suicide, euthanasia, abortion and divorce. The Russians, however, are more liberal than Europeans in almost all the questions. The only exception is the attitude toward homosexuality.

When examining the results one must remember that they measure stances, not what people actually do or what the prevailing practices in society are.[15]

15 The difference between stances and practices can be illustrated when looking at how accepting bribes is dealt with. Clearly over a half of Russians feel that taking bribes is never acceptable. Despite this, Russia received the grade 2,8 on the corruption index (1-10) of Transparency International in 2004, and with such a grade it ranks among the most corrupt countries in the world. Finns are more strictly against taking bribes than the Russians but the differences between stances are small compared to the grades and rank on the corruption index. In 2004 Finland was the world's least corrupt country with a grade of 9,7. Another concrete example of the difference between stance and practice is how abortion is dealt with, which is more rejected in Russia than in Finland. In 2001 1,3 million children were born in Russia and 2,1 million abortions were done. For every hundred births 163 abortions were done. 55 555 children were born in Finland in 2002 and 10 900 abortions were done. For every hundred births, twenty abortions were done. However, the number of abortions performed in Russia has been decreasing. In 1995 for every hundred births, 203 abortions were performed.

The Effect of Religion on Moral Perceptions

In viewing how religiosity affects moral perceptions, one can see in both Finland and Russia that for most moral questions the more religious have "higher" morals. Types formed by measures of religiosity are, however, uneven for gender and age distributions and because of this the review leaves somewhat open to what extent the differences in type are caused by religious differences and to what extent from age and gender differences. The same phenomenon would come up when viewing religiosity with the help of any variable whatsoever because in all questions women and the elderly were shown to be more religious than men and younger persons. This is why it is necessary to review the relationship of religiosity to moral questions by excluding the effects of age and gender. (For this, partial correlation is used through which it can be seen if some other variable(s) actually do affect the interdependence between two things.)

A review shows that the religious variable (God's importance) correlates more with every moral question when the effects of age and gender are not removed. From this we can infer that a part of the correlation between religiosity and moral variables can be explained by age or gender. With partial correlation we can also see that a part the dependence between variables actually results from religiosity. In both Finland and Russia questions of sexual ethics are most clearly questions of religiosity. Religion greatly affects how one views sexual intercourse by minors and casual sexual relationships. Religion has also a clear influence on how one views abortion and prostitution. Religion also affects views on euthanasia and divorce.

When reviewing all the European countries that took part in the *World Values* survey together, religion does not seem to have a great influence on questions related to structural morals such as tax fraud, demanding unfounded welfare claims, accepting bribes, etc. In questions of freedom of choice, the differences are somewhat greater and, as expected, the more religious appear to favor stricter morals. Religiosity clearly has an effect on questions of sexual ethics (homosexuality, abortion, divorce, etc.) where the more religious were significantly more conservative than others. Religious persons also rejected euthanasia significantly more than others.

Conclusions

Churches proclaim their message in the context of a modern society where individualism has increased and moral perceptions have become fragmented. The operating environment of churches has changed: there is a greater freedom of choice than before in both religions and morals.

Religious pluralism has increased in Europe. Many international agreements confirmed by the European nations as well as the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights require respecting human rights, equality and the rights of minorities. The traditionally dominant churches have to work in an environment where there are numerous other churches and religious organizations – as well as growing Muslim organizations.

Secularization has not progressed in the ways predicted decades ago. Religion and religious questions have not disappeared. Institutionalized religion, however, has weakened in many European countries. Religious beliefs are now more frequently self-constructed and are not in accordance with the teachings of the major churches.

Younger generations are clearly more liberal than older ones with regard to moral perceptions. In most European countries they have been brought up in very different surroundings than their parents. It cannot be assumed that as they grow up their moral views will change to a more traditional direction. Younger generations are a special challenge for the proclamation and function of churches.

Religiosity affects moral views in the field of morality of freedom of choice, especially sexual ethics. In the field of structural morals it is not as great an influence. Religion's influence on morals and society's base values is, however, a much bigger question that whether or not religious people have "higher" morals than others. The Christian tradition has over centuries left an indelible mark on European societies and their base values.

EUROPE AT A CROSSROADS: SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE JUXTAPOSITION OF CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM

Hilarion, Bishop of Vienna and Austria

Questions regarding values are central to the dialogue between societies. The future of mankind depends on moral choices.

Values in the Context of Globalization and Secularization

Values are especially relevant and important when dealing with globalization. Globalization is a very complex process. It affects all of humanity as well as individuals, it affects politics and the economy, morality and justice, science and art, as well as education and culture. Globalization leaves its mark on all aspects of peoples' lives except religion. The only systematic opponent of the relentless assault of globalization is religion. Religion tries to preserve its central values that are challenged by globalization. Only religion, with its own ethical system, can resist the ideology of globalization. Religion's ethical system is based on centuries' of experience of the generations that preceded globalization.

In modern discussions of values, at one end of the barricade are those inspired by religious conviction, and at the other end those who represent secular humanism. The worldview of globalization is based on the humanistic idea of a person's absolute worth and that there are certain universal, shared values on which the values of all civilization should be based. Shared values do not, however, refer to those values that are common to all religious and non-religious people alike (do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, etc.), but also include many ideas, based in liberal humanism, that are problematic to religion.

For example, I mean the idea that everyone has the right to their own lifestyle as long as it does not harm anyone else. According to humanistic morals a person's

freedom is only limited by the freedom of others: whatever does not harm another's interests is right, whatever limits their freedom is wrong.

Humanistic ethics completely lack the concept of absolute moral norms and sin. The religious tradition, however, does have the concept of the absolute moral law, decreed by God, the transgression of which is called sin. From the point of view of a religious person, there are many things that do not harm another person's interests that are nonetheless morally unacceptable. And true freedom for a believer derives not from permitting everything but from deliverance from sin, conquering all that which prevents the attaining of spiritual perfection.

It is no coincidence that modern liberal humanism is closely linked with globalization. Liberal humanism considers itself, like globalization, to be universal and an ideology to which there is no alternative. Obviously, humanists admit that anyone has the right to follow – or not to follow – any religion they choose, since forbidding religions would be politically incorrect. In reality, humanism derives its strength from anti-religious propaganda and tries therefore to use all its powers to weaken religions, to drive them into the ghettos away from the mainstream of society and minimize the impact religion has on people and especially on youth. Modern humanism's secular, worldly, anti-Church and anti-clerical emphasis is clear. And because humanistic ideology increasingly resembles militant secularism, the conflict between humanism and Christianity is becoming a battle for survival: a fight not for life but for death.

Liberalists and humanists happily describe this battle as a struggle between what is on the one hand "archaic" and "backward", based on the ideas of a pre-scientific age and the speculation of a metaphysical theology belonging to a bygone era, and what is a progressive, scientific and modern worldview on the other hand. This is the idea that they feed to people through the mass media and state-run education. Education, is after all, in most Western countries, in the hands of the liberalists. Young people are raised to believe that we live in a post-Christian age, where religion belongs to old people who are behind the times. Liberal humanism actively fights for the hearts and minds of the youth, because it assumes that the outcome of this value struggle depends on their worldview. Humanists try to present the issue as an intergenerational conflict.

A group of political scientists, historians and philosophers believes that the traditional religious way of life should be replaced with a liberalistic substitute. A typical representative of this school of thought is the American scientist Francis Fukuyama. His ideas are based on Hegel's concept of history and on the Nietzchean concept of "the last man". Fukuyama believes that the liberal world view has

no competitor and therefore challenges from "every crackpot Messiah" – i.e., representatives of traditional religion – can be ignored. Fukuyama sees religion as an obstacle to the triumph of liberalism and the global state. Fukuyama prefers moral relativism, which is successfully fed to pupils in most Western school systems: "Modern education...liberates men from their attachments to tradition and authority… Modern education, in other words, stimulates a certain tendency toward relativism, that is, the doctrine that all horizons and values systems are relative to their time and place, and that none are true but reflect the prejudices or interests of those who advance them. The doctrine that says that there is no privileged perspective dovetails very nicely with democratic man's desire to believe that his way of life is just as good as any other… The last man at the end of history *knows* better than to risk his life for a cause, because he recognizes that history was full of pointless battles in which men fought over whether they should be Christian or Muslim, Protestant or Catholic…"

Fukuyama does not conceal his satisfaction when he writes: "Liberalism vanquished religion in Europe… Religion has thus been relegated to the sphere of private life – exiled, it would seem, more or less permanently from European political life…" According to Fukuyama, "Belief tends to separate rather than bring people together, because there are so many alternatives. One can of course join one of many little communities of believers, but they are unlikely to overlap with the communities of work and neighborhood. And when the belief becomes inconvenient – when one is cut off from the inheritance by one's parents, or when one finds out that one's guru has had his hand in the till – the belief usually just fades away like any other phase of adolescent development."

Real life, however, demonstrates that to millions of people, belief is not just a phase, submitting to one's parents' will or following a guru, but a conscious choice that gives purpose to life. For these people it is irrelevant whether they are Christian, Muslim, Protestant, Orthodox or Catholic. Many of them are not merely prepared to "risk their lives for a cause", but also to die for their faith, just like the tens of thousands of martyrs in Russia during the 20th century. Their valor and the unprecedented spiritual awakening in Eastern Europe demonstrates that the religious phase in mankind's development is far from over and faith can inspire people as much in this day and age as it did centuries ago.

It can be said with certainty, then, that secular ideology will not replace the religious worldview, but the religious value system will continue to exist alongside liberal humanism. "It is wrong to see the meeting of these two value systems as a clash between two worlds, between what is old and traditional and what is new and democratic. If this were the case, it would not be possible to

speak of a clash between two systems, but of a historical process, a continuum, where old traditional values are exchanged for new ones that reflect the realities of the modern world, the so-called liberal-democratic values. However, the truth is not the replacement of values over time, but instead the polarization that leads from time to time to political, religious and military conflicts."

The volatility of the current international situation can in part be explained by the fact that the western ideology, which considers itself universal, is foisted onto people who have been brought up with a different moral tradition and who have different values. These people see the total dictatorship of the West as a threat to their own identity. The clear anti-religious tone of modern liberal humanism is resisted and repelled where the religious norm is the norm of life and where religion dictates behavior and spiritual life is based on religious experience. This refers not just to people for whom religion is a personal choice, but to entire nations, cultures and societies that have been shaped by religion. Especially on that level the opposition between secularism and religion can lead to open conflict.

Religion can provide an alternative to totalitarian liberalism and militant secularism. The first, more radical alternative is represented by Islamic extremists who have declared a jihad, a holy war, on Western post-Christian society with all its pan-humanistic values. The events of 9/11 cannot be understood without understanding the reaction to the West's and especially the USA's attempts to convert Islam to its own worldview and behavioral norms. We are accustomed to hear that terrorism does not make distinctions between peoples or religions, and no one doubts that there are unresolved ethnic and political issues behind the attacks. At the same time it has to be admitted that the most aggressive practitioners of Islamic terrorism derive their zeal from practicing religion and consider their actions to be a response to the totalitarian hegemony of Western secular thinking. As long as the West persists with its monologue promoting its universalist worldview and considers its principles to be the only ones valid for the entire world and all peoples, terrorism, like a sword of Damocles, will continue to hang over the head of all Western society.

Another alternative provided by religion to the challenge posed by secularism is the attempt to fit religion itself, right down to doctrine and morals, into modern liberalistic standards. Some Protestant congregations have adopted this solution, and over the last few decades have purposefully introduced liberal principles into their creed and practices. As a result of this process, the foundation of Christian dogmatics and morality has been washed away. Priests are not required to believe in the Resurrection, same-sex marriages are allowed and priests can live in such relationships themselves. Theologians can rewrite the Bible and develop

countless different versions of a politically correct, liberal Christianity. Altering the Church's centuries-old tradition to be more palatable to feminism has resulted in the acceptance of female priesthood in these congregations, which further widened the gap between these Protestants and the representatives of traditional Christianity.

The third and final option offered by religion is to engage in peaceful if necessarily unbalanced dialogue with secularism, so that a balance might be struck between the liberal-democratic social structure and the religious way of life. This is what many traditional churches attempt to do. This includes the Catholic and Orthodox Churches as well as representatives of some other religions, such as Judaism, Buddhism and moderate Islam. Many liberal-democratic politicians have understood the sensitivity of the issue, should religious communities be robbed of their right to express their opinions in society, and understand the significance of dialogue between society and the Church. An increasing number of politicians are seeking to establish a connection with religious leaders and understand that the opinions of churches and religious groups cannot be ignored in the discussion of values upon which to base the new world order.

One example of an organization where the importance of dialogue has been understood is the European Union, one of the main players in the integration and globalization of the modern world. In terms of its worldview, the EU is a secular superstate, based on humanistic values inherited from the Enlightenment. Until recently the attempts of churches and congregations to engage in dialogue with EU bodies did not elicit any response from European international organizations. Even today there is no separate body responsible for coordinating systematic and constructive dialogue with the EU. Such a body should be established when the new constitution is ratified, because the constitution requires the EU to engage in "open and regular" dialogue with churches and religious organizations. This point, and that those "universal values" on which the EU is based are said to be inspired by "Europe's cultural, religious and humanistic heritage" could open up new possibilities for dialogue between the churches and liberal humanism.

The Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches have the opportunity to engage in this dialogue at a very high intellectual level. In the societal doctrine of both Churches the problematics of the values debate have been thoroughly and diversely addressed. The Roman Catholic Church deals with these issues in its many social treatises, the latest of which, "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church" (2004) was prepared by the Justice and Peace Commission. The most significant treatise of a similar nature in the Russian Orthodox Church is the "Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" (2000). In both

publications, religious values are considered more important than the interests of man's earthly existence. In addition to that, the Compendium recognizes universal values, but refers to values that are "drawn from Revelation and human nature", i.e., they are drawn from anthropological and religious sources.

What is needed now is a serious and thoughtful dialogue, not the continuation of conflict between religion and humanism. This dialogue is supported by traditional Christianity. It has nothing against humanism per se, just its liberal and atheistic version. The Church cannot accept a humanism that, according to its creators, "rejects mysticism and religion". Instead of atheistic humanism, the Church proposes a spiritual humanism, based on spiritual values. This is a humanism that "is up to the standards of God's plan of love in history, an integral and solidary humanism capable of creating a new social, economic and political order, founded on the dignity and freedom of every human person, to be brought about in peace, justice and solidarity."

These values listed in the Compendium are entirely equivalent to the values considered universal by humanism, liberalism and globalism. The Church is not opposed to these values, but it understands them to be something different. The Church's conceptions of these is different – sometimes entirely opposite, and therein lies the dichotomy between the two humanisms, between the religious and atheistic, ecclesiastical and earthly, the traditional and liberal. It is worth going into further detail about this.

Human Dignity and Freedom. Christian and Anti- Christian Humanism

In the religious tradition the concept of human dignity and freedom is based on the idea that man's origin is divine. According to the Biblical and Christian tradition man was created in the image of God. "Image" refers to something initially placed in man, and "likeness" refers to a potential that man must realize. The venerable John of Damascus considers God's image to be evident in man's reason and free will, whereas "likeness" he understands as "comparable to God, insofar as that is possible". At the core of Eastern Christian anthropology is the idea of becoming divine, perfect likeness with God. Thus man becomes, through grace, what God is by nature. Becoming divine is the goal of the Christian life. It is achieved through cooperation – synergy – between man and God. Thus man must willingly and knowingly renounce sin and direct his will towards doing

good. Man does not lose his freedom in striving to be like God, but his free will is harmoniously one with God's will. According to Christian doctrine the possibility of becoming divine lies at the core of human dignity.

In Christian anthropology an important position is held by the doctrine that the original human nature created by God was distorted by the Fall into sin. The first man had no tendency towards sin. It was only after eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that he was joined with evil and sin, and he was forced to make a final decision between good and evil. Man must make this decision every moment of his life. So that man can choose the right direction, he must consciously direct his will towards good. Maximus Confessor wrote that man also has a will of nature, which in its original and natural state always strives for good, but the fallen man is contrary and strives towards evil. At the same time, according to Maximus, man has the will to judge, which is the will specific to the person, and attempts to repair the natural will towards good and purification from sin. In Jesus Christ, who was both God and man, free human will was harmoniously one with God's will. The will of an ordinary person who does not achieve holiness is often on a collision course with God's will.

Thus Christianity, like secular humanism, speaks of human dignity and freedom. In Christianity, however, freedom must take into account spiritual and moral responsibility to man and God. Humanism also speaks of the responsibility of freedom, but in the absence of absolute moral rules it means the limiting of one person's freedom because of other's freedoms. From the perspective of atheistic humanism the realization of freedom is nothing more than the uninhibited fulfillment of all man's desires, impinged on only by the desires of others. On that principle, any moral regulations or spiritual values can be interpreted relativistically. Nothing has value in itself and no rule is a rule in itself, if the only criterion is human free will. Anyone can determine his own values based on his worldview, his wishes, habits and inclinations, and everyone can decide the limits of his own behavior based on what he thinks is right or wrong.

Cyril, Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, speaks of the radical conceptual differences between secular liberalism and traditional Christianity regarding what the nature of freedom is. "According to Christianity, true freedom is born as a consequence of liberation from sin. Liberals, to whom the concept of sin is foreign, speak of man's liberation as he is, that is, liberating the inclination to sin. A free person has the right to cast off all that chains him and prevent the buildup of the sinful self. The moral state is, according to liberalists, an internal matter for the sovereign and independent person. In this case, liberalism is diametrically opposed to Christianity."

In a secular society there are laws whose purpose is to coordinate and harmonize individuals' freedom and to ensure that man does not have to sacrifice his own freedom for the freedom of others. However, the ultimate aim of atheistic humanism is to release man from all external rules that restrict his freedom. These rules also include those moral rules that connect man to society and the state. It is no coincidence that so-called planetary humanism is defended. Planetary humanism aims to gradually release man from the "yoke of metaphysics and theology" but also from certain values typical of states, nations or peoples. Already during the Enlightenment some supported the idea of a world without boundaries dictated by the state, culture or society. But it was not until now, in the era of globalization, that this could be put into practice. Leaders of globalism and activists for planetary humanism are equally zealous to achieve this. The former are in favor of a borderless world largely for political and economic reasons, the latter favor it as part of their worldview.

The roots of modern secular humanism can be found in the anthropology of Enlightenment philosophers. It was the philosophers of the Enlightenment who first openly challenged Christian anthropology. The representatives of the Enlightenment placed a premium on human reason, and believed that reason can guide the world to a general material and spiritual blossoming. Belief in the victory of pure reason, in positive technological advances and in the absolute worth of scientific discoveries became the cornerstone of Enlightenment philosophy. It was during the Enlightenment that the artificial dichotomy between science and religion was created. Science began to be regarded as the force for progress and religion and Christianity in particular as the obstacle to overall flowering. The most radical thinkers renounced religion and tried to get rid of it for good, the less radical considered religion acceptable, but only for maintaining moral and social order. During the Enlightenment, the principles of the Enlightenment and Christianity came head to head for the first time. The objective was that the latter be destroyed.

The disagreement between Enlightenment thinkers and the Church was not about God but about man. Man's nature and purpose was disputed, as was his freedom and dignity. The badly misguided anthropology (especially from a Christian point of view) of the Enlightenment led to none of the attempts to apply Enlightenment theory in practice being successful. When Enlightenment thinkers denied the Christian concept of the sinfulness of man's nature, they drifted into excessive optimism, based on unrealistic and utopistic faith in the potential of human reason. When Enlightenment thinkers placed an absolute value on human freedom, they forgot to put sufficient emphasis on man's negative and destructive tendencies.

These tendencies are especially realized when actions are not regulated by any absolute moral rules or subordinate to any higher idea.

The erroneous conception of man's freedoms and potential derived from the Enlightenment worldview, and which continued to be developed in the 19th century, has been in the background of some large-scale socio-political processes that have been very costly for mankind.

The first such process was the French Revolution, where Enlightenment philosophy was brought to life for the first time. From the Enlightenment the Revolution inherited the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality, as well as a negative attitude towards religion. The Enlightenment presented an intellectual challenge to Christianity, but the revolution tried to destroy Christianity physically. Voltaire concluded his letters with "Solve the riddle!" The riddle in this case being the Church. Diderot announced "mankind will not be set free until the king is strangled with the guts of the last pope". Rousseau added, "man was born free, but now he is in chains." The French listened to these wordsmiths. The kingdom fell. Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette and the French aristocracy were murdered at the guillotine. The Church was stripped of its property and churches were sacked. Reason overcame faith and led to the September Massacres, the Terror, Robespierre's dictatorship, Bonaparte and the Empire, and a war that engulfed Europe for a quarter-century that led to France losing its power and becoming wounded. This stark assessment of events in 18th century France has been proposed by a conservative American politician, and it is unlikely that all the French share his opinion. After all, the storming of the Bastille is still commemorated as a national holiday. It is nonetheless undeniable that the revolution did not lead to the liberation dreamed of by Enlightenment thinkers, or to fraternity or equality, but rather the human dignity much vaunted by the Enlightenment was cruelly washed away by the guillotine and the persecutions.

Another similar major socio-political process was the Russian Revolution. The ideology behind it was German materialism, which had connections already to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. In the Russian Revolution the workers were presented with the challenge of a classless society, where one man cannot oppress another. To achieve this sort of society, Marx declared a socialist revolution that was to take place in all civilized nations simultaneously. The revolution was supposed to first take out existing governments and give rise to rule by the proletariat, called communism. Religion, which Marx called "the opiate of the masses" would no longer exist in this system. The socialist revolution did happen, although not in all countries at once, but just in one and as we know it led to the rise of communism, millions of victims and decades of cruel terror.

The third such process of interest to us is German national socialism. Its ideological basis is Nietzsche's doctrine of the death of God. Man was to take the place of the dead God. Both Nietzscheism and Nazism are deeply anti-Christian in nature. Hitler's plan was to found a new religion in which the highest values would be race and bloodlines. Even in 1933 he still stated that he wanted to "destroy Christianity in Germany, down to the last drop". And replace it with belief in "the god of nature, of our own people, our own destiny, our own blood." "Enough with pondering the Old Testament, New Testament and the mere words of Christ… it is all the same deception. It is all one and the same and it does not make us free." The Nazis did not have time to completely root out Christianity let alone create a new religion and make people believe in it. Nevertheless, 20 years of Nazi rule in Germany was enough to bring about a world war, destroy tens of millions of people, and commit atrocities unequalled in human history.

It is obvious that the three ideologies described above are very different from one another. However, they also have much in common. Firstly, their anthropological basis is flawed by Christianity's standards, as is their distorted perception of freedom and human dignity. Secondly, they turned the traditional value system on its head and replaced it with different utopistic values. Thirdly, they derived their strength from extreme, irrational, animalistic hatred of Christianity. These three cases proved to be disastrous for mankind and caused immeasurable harm. It is clear that modern secular humanism differs from those ideologies described above in a number of ways. A humanist today would probably be insulted to be compared to the Nazis or communists. The humanism of the latter 20th century, which we can read about, for example, in the UN's declaration of human rights was born as a reaction to "the barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind", i.e., the crimes of fascism. Nonetheless, humanists refuse to see the connection between these crimes and the anthropological theories spawned in the minds – poisoned by godlessness – of 18th century French Enlightenment philosophers. These theories were further developed by 19th century materialists. Humanists refuse to admit that the humanicizing of morals by denying religious morals was one of the sources of inspiration for the French revolutionaries, communists and Nazis alike. Modern humanists acknowledge the connection between their worldview and Enlightenment philosophy, and between their socio-political views and the French Revolution. They thus admit to accepting the anthropology of Enlightenment philosophers and recognize the consequences of these views in history. Modern humanists do not renounce the anti-Christian rhetoric of the Enlightenment but instead continue to declare that just as Christianity is an obstacle to progress, so faith is to reason and religion is to science. "Faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them,

is an unproved and outmoded faith," declared the authors of the 1973 Humanist Manifesto. "Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Traditional religions are … obstacles to human progress."

History has more than once proved the utopian and destructive force of humanistic theories based on distorted anthropology, the denial of traditional values which aim to vanquish the moral rules set out by God. Previously these theories could only be realized in individual countries. The ideology of planetary humanism is dangerous because it represents the global states and declares itself to be the norm that everybody must accept regardless of their own national, cultural or societal background. The adoption of secular humanism at a planetary level could lead to a massive collapse not just in one or two countries but across the globe.

In 1946, Berdyaev wrote, "humanism and human dignity can only be born from the depth of religion. Human dignity presupposes the existence of God." These words, pronounced by the great Russian philosopher immediately after World War II, reflect the understanding of humanism typical of Christianity. The Church does not grant the atheists a monopoly on the use of the term "humanism" and allow humanism to be equated with godlessness. The Church opposes the underrating of traditional values in the name of human dignity and freedom. The Church opposes attempts to declare religion a relic of the past and drive it away from the public eye in the name of humanism. The Church does not accept the myth according to which science can prove Christianity's basic tenets to be false. The Church considers its own concept of human dignity and freedom to be the highest form of humanism, no less scientific or less advanced that the anthropological theories of modern agnostics and atheists.

The Moral Consequences of Abandoning Traditional Values. Problems with Family and Sexual Ethics.

Now we shall proceed to consider how abandoning traditional values affects mankind's morals. As an example we shall consider some aspects of family ethics, sexual behavior and relations between the sexes.

In all traditional religions including Christianity, Judaism and Islam, marriage is understood as a divinely ordained union between a man and a woman. According

to Christianity, marriage is unique and indissoluble and divorce is considered a sin (although there are numerous exceptions to this). In the Orthodox tradition, marriage is considered a lifelong union between partners which includes both physical and spiritual intimacy. According to the teachings of Paul, the head of the family is the man, who should love his wife like Christ loves his congregation and she should be subservient to him like the congregation is to Christ. This does not mean to suggest that the husband is a despot and the wife is enslaved, but that the husband in the first instance bears responsibility for the family, cares for them and loves them. It should not be forgotten that all Christians must compete with one another in awarding each other respect. "In the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. [12]For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God."

The Orthodox Church condemns all deception, fornication, marital infidelity and prostitution. Although people often mistake this, the "Church does not at all call to abhor the body or sexual intimacy as such. For the physical relations between man and woman are blessed by God in marriage in which they express chaste love, complete communion and the 'harmony of the minds and bodies' of the spouses." According to its doctrine, the Church condemns the turning of "these chaste and appropriate relations as God has designed them and the human body itself into an object of humiliating exploitation and trade to derive egoistic, impersonal, loveless and perverted pleasure. For this reason, the Church invariably denounces prostitution and the preaching of the so-called free love in which physical intimacy is completely divorced from personal and spiritual communion, selflessness and all-round responsibility for each other, which are possible only in the lifetime conjugal faithfulness."

According to the Orthodox Church children are an inextricable part of marriage, the fruit of the love between a man and a woman, and giving birth to and raising children is one of the most important aspects of marriage. Childlessness was considered a punishment from on high in the Old Testament, and children were God's blessing. "Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward." In accordance with this, the Orthodox Church does not approve of refusing to give birth or the artificial interruption of pregnancy. Abortion is categorically forbidden and the Church considers it tantamount to murder and exhorts all parties – the woman, the man, and the doctor – to accept responsibility. The use of contraceptives is likewise forbidden. In this case the Church separates contraceptives into to two groups: those that cause abortion and those that do not interfere with life already conceived. The former are equivalent to abortion and the latter are not.

Based on scripture and tradition the Church condemns homosexual relations and considers them a profanation of human nature as created by God. And what if someone has homosexual tendencies but does not engage in homosexual congress? According to the doctrine of the Church, it shall be cured by the sacraments, prayer, fasting, reading the Bible and Church Fathers, and amongst the faithful, when they are prepared to give moral support.

In the instances mentioned above the teaching of the Orthodox Church does not differ from that of the Catholic Church (apart from the idea that the man is the head of the family, as the most recent Catholic treatises remain silent on this point). The Catholic Church does not accept divorce either, deeming it a serious breach of the law. It also teaches the dual purpose of marriage, for the mutual joy of the spouses and for the continuation of life. The birth of children in a marriage is a gift of God. "Spouses are called to create new life and in this they are partakers of God's creative power". Regulating conception is allowed, if it takes place naturally, e.g., by withholding from intercourse. Abortion is categorically forbidden and it is considered a crime against human life.

The Catholic Church regards sexuality as a source of joy and pleasure, but emphasizes that it is intended for "the love of a man and woman joined in marriage. In marriage the physical intimacy between partners becomes the sign and guarantee of spiritual union." All forms of extra-marital sex – fornication, prostitution and rape – are considered inappropriate and sinful. The Catholic Church differentiates between homosexual conduct, which is considered lewd and "unconditionally illegal" and homosexual inclinations, which may be inborn rather than consciously chosen. According to Catholic doctrine, "people with a homosexual inclination should act with prudence. By exercising self-control over those factors which seek to promote inner freedom, these persons may sometimes, gradually and with great effort, approach Christian perfection."

Until the second half of the 20th century these values were generally accepted in most Western countries. However, the post-war secular revolution and the rise of the feminist movement in the 1960s resulted in a radical transformation of family and sexual ethics. That was the when the liberalization of legislation that persists to this day began. The huge and unprecedented break-down of society as a result of the sexual revolution has in practice affected all Western countries. In just under half a century, the traditional notions of family and sex were turned on their head and were made to give way to "more advanced" values based on a liberal worldview. This change not only transformed Western society down to its very foundations, it tore an impenetrable gulf between the West and nations that continued to support traditional family and sexual ethics.

First people began to speak of equality between men and women. There is nothing wrong with equality per se, if we are speaking of political, cultural and social equality, women's right to go to work, participate in society and government, etc. The problem is that as a result of the sexual revolution and the battles of the women's movement the natural balance between man and woman based on human essence broke down. Motherhood was torn down as was the concept of man as the breadwinner on whose shoulders the material well-being of the family rested. From this point on, both men and women saw to using their professional talents in the same way, and both were made responsible for the financial situation of the family. But when most of a woman's energy is spent on pursuing a career and earning money, her opportunities to give birth and raise children are significantly reduced. For this reason the number of multi-child families is going down, while the number of one- or two-child families or even childless couples is on the rise, and the birth rate is in decline in most Western countries.

During the sexual revolution the idea of marriage's permanence was rejected. The revolutionaries declared the indissolubility of marriage to be outdated and regressive, and claimed the concept was based on social and economic repression and was incompatible with the natural drive to gain maximal satisfaction from everything. People began to preach the concept of free love, which meant the acceptance of extramarital affairs, numerous sexual partners, spouse-swapping, premarital relations and divorce. The traditional concepts of marital fidelity and consideration were set against the concept of hedonism. This concept, spread by the mass media and public education, has led to the rise in the number of divorces and has contributed to the demographic crisis afflicting the Western nations.

Having risen to defend women's rights, the sexual revolution developed family planning and widely available contraception. These programs were justified "scientifically" by arguments of overpopulation and the limited availability of natural resources. In the early 1960s contraceptives were distributed and their use increased exponentially. In America alone, where the contraceptive pill first went on sale in 1960, the use of the pill increased by 6% in the first three years and 43% in ten years. Now contraceptives are widely used in the West, and it can be said without exaggeration, that most women use contraceptives.

The sexual revolution has caused a lot of damage to the traditional concept of the right to life of all people, including unborn children. A global campaign to legalize abortion was started. The first country to legalize abortion was the Soviet Union, where abortion was legalized in 1920 (in 1936 the demographic crisis led to it being outlawed, but it was permitted again in 1955). In the Soviet Union the allowing of abortions was only one aspect of the destruction of traditional values

and the spreading of atheism. In the West, where traditional values endured for longer, abortion was not legalized until after the sexual revolution. By the 1990s abortion had been legalized in most Western countries, such as Great Britain (1967), Finland (1970), Denmark (1973), the USA (1973), Austria (1974), France (1975), Sweden (1975), Italy (1978), Norway (1979), the Netherlands (1981), Greece (1986), Czechoslovakia (1987), Bulgaria (1990), Romania (1990), Albania (1991), Belgium (1991), Germany (1993) and Ukraine (1993). Nowadays abortion is forbidden only in countries that have a strong Catholic presence, such as Ireland, Poland, Spain, Portugal and Malta. How long will it last? Poland is a unique example of a country where, thanks to the influence of the Church, the law allowing abortion was repealed in 1993; other countries have been following an increasingly liberal trend.

One of the accomplishments of the sexual revolution is that attitudes towards homosexuality as well as other alternative sexualities (bisexuality, transsexuality) have become more positive. This change is the result of a planned battle over many years. A specific group found on behalf of the rights of sexual minorities in order to change society's opinions to its own advantage and to slacken the legislation regarding sexual ethics. In every country events are proceeding according to the same model. First the sexual minorities demanded tolerance towards their way of life, then tried to legalize homosexuality. Then they fight for equal recognition for homosexual relationships, and then to have homosexual relationships receive the same rights and benefits as marriage. Finally, same-sex couples want the right to adopt and raise children. In different countries the process is happening at different speeds, but there is a universally noticeable tendency to dismantle all restrictions and prohibitions on sexual behavior. Only the final boundary remains uncrossed: pedophilia has yet to be officially accepted. How long will it take those who fight for sexual freedom to cross this line?

I want to emphasize that modern Christianity, despite holding onto tradition, does not insist on the persecution or discrimination of sexual minorities. However, the Church resists the attempts to sanction sin and resists all forms of homosexual propaganda. Numerous examples show that in societies, where homosexual propaganda is forbidden, the phenomenon is small, although it does exist (such as in Islamic countries). And vice versa, where homosexuality is systematically advertized in the mass media and public education, the phenomenon grows in size. Today in the West, criticism of homosexual propaganda is politically incorrect. Thus homosexuality is endorsed and it is present in the mass media and public education. The positive regard in which love towards members of the same sex is held is one of the ideological paradigms of modern society, and the revoking of laws segregating sexual minorities is expected of all countries that want to belong

to civilized society. For example, according to EU principles, no country with laws forbidding homosexuality will be allowed membership to the EU. For this reason Cyprus was not granted membership before homosexuality was legalized there. Similar demands are being made of Romania, which is a candidate for membership in the EU. These trends cannot help but raise concerns in traditional churches.

What have the consequences of the sexual revolution been for the West? What has the abandoning of traditional moral values for liberal sexual ethics led to in Europe, America and other developed countries? Where will further liberalization lead from here?

Increasingly people are admitting that the consequences of the unprecedented demographic crisis resulting from the sexual revolution have been catastrophic for all of Western society. This is acknowledged not only by religious leaders, but also by politicians and by above all those who support traditional values. The American politician Pat Buchanan in his aptly titled "Death of the West" calls homo occidentalis an endangered species.

"As a growing population has long been a mark of healthy nations and rising civilizations, falling populations have been a sign of nations and civilizations in decline. If that holds true, Western civilization, power and wealth aside, is in critical condition. As late as 1960, European people, including Americans, Australians, and Canadians, numbered 750 million, one-fourth of the 3 billion people alive. While world population had doubled to six billion in forty years, the European peoples had stopped reproducing. Their populations had begun to stagnate and, in many countries, had already begun to fall. Of Europe's forty-seven nations, only one, Muslim Albania, was, by 2000, maintaining a birthrate sufficient to keep it alive indefinitely. Europe had begun to die. The prognosis is grim. Between 2000 and 2050, world population will grow by more than three billion to over nine billion people, but this 50 percent increase in global population will come entirely in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as one hundred million people of European stock vanish from the earth. In 1960, people of European ancestry were one-fourth of the world's population; in 2000, they were one-sixth; in 2050, they will be one-tenth. These are the statistics of a vanishing race. A growing awareness of what they portend has induced a sense of foreboding, even panic, in Europe."

"Irony of ironies," exclaims Buchanan, "today, an aging, dying Christian West is pressing the Third World and the Islamic world to accept contraception, abortion, and sterilization as the West has done. But why should they enter a suicide pact

with us when they stand to inherit the earth when we are gone?" These words are not the demagogy of a populist political leader, but a conclusion drawn from statistics and passionless scientific prognoses. In his book Buchanan shows that marriage as an institution and reproduction within marriage, the increase in the divorce rate, legalizing abortion, the availability of contraception and the liberalization of sexual ethics are all connected to the West's abandonment of traditional moral norms based on a religious world view. The cultural revolution at the end of the 20th century, which razed the foundations of traditional morals, has replaced the Western Christian values of self-sacrifice, altruism and loyalty with militant individualism, and it has brought Western society to the brink of destruction "Only a social counterrevolution or a religious awakening can turn the West around before a falling birthrate closes off the last exit ramp and brings down the curtain on Western Man's long-running play," concludes Buchanan.

Traditional and Liberal Attitudes towards Death. The Euthanasia Debate.

The antihumanistic character of modern humanism is clearly evident in the recent debates regarding euthanasia. Humanists advocate the "right to die" of the incurably ill, and the more radical believe that regardless of whether you are healthy or ill you can commit suicide or turn to a doctor and ask for help in ending your life. In many western countries there are organizations that promote the legalizing of euthanasia and suicide. In France there is the group "Right to a Dignified Death", in Japan "Death With Dignity". America has the Hemlock Society, which has been operating for almost 20 years and has almost 25,000 members. The society's motto is "Good life, good death." The society's founder is Derek Humphry, the author of Final Exit, a sort of suicide guide. The book offers advice on how to commit suicide or help others end their lives. It also offers a table of the lethal doses of various drugs, considers the merit of potassium cyanide, lists useful methods of asphyxiation from plastic bags to exhaust fumes. Humphry has tested his ideas in practice on his wife, brother, and father-in-law. The wife and father-in-law took sleeping pills according to Humphry's prescription, and he broke his brother's respirator.

Euthanasia activists cannot see the connection between their own ideas and Nazi Germany. It was in Germany that the first euthanasia theory was presented, and where euthanasia was first applied in practice. In 1936, Dr Helmut Unger published a story about a doctor who had helped his wife, who was suffering from sclerosis,

to die. A movie was made based on this story, as a result of which the audience felt sympathy for "merciful death". Soon after this a father with an incurably ill child approached Hitler and asked for a doctor to end his life. Hitler passed the matter on to his personal physician Karl Brandt, and he fulfilled the father's request. Later, Hitler ordered Philipp Bouhler and Dr Brandt to grant physicians a license to "provide a merciful death to those who, by human understanding are incurably ill." Soon after this the first Hungerhaus was established, which was the name for houses where incurably ill children and the elderly were starved to death. From 1939 to 1941 euthanasia became routine, as the incurably ill, crippled and mentally retarded were destroyed in gas chambers on doctors' orders. During these years almost 70,000 people died in the euthanasia program, and at the post-war Nuremberg trials the number was revealed to be 275,000. During the Nuremberg process, Dr Brandt said, "my most important motive was to help people who could not help themselves and whose suffering continued… if Hippocrates is still quoted today, it is said that invalids or those who are suffering may not be given poison. Any modern doctor who makes this kind of rhetorical and rigid oath is a liar or a hypocrite. I just shortened the suffering of these unfortunate people."

The same arguments are used by people who support euthanasia today, and who enjoy increasing support among European legislators. Until recently, euthanasia was illegal in all of Europe. In most Western countries it is still forbidden, although the practice is becoming increasingly common. The shift in social opinion in favor of euthanasia has led to two countries, the Netherlands and Belgium, ratifying laws in 2002 according to which doctors who help incurably ill patients to die, are not legally liable. Similar laws will probably be accepted in other European countries and it may even end up in EU legislation. The European Council is already discussing an initiative to reinforce at a legislative level the existing active euthanasia, i.e., a physician's right to "end a patient's life at his or her active, avowed and considered request." So far there is no mention of the systematic destruction of the incurably ill, as happened in Hitler's Germany, but who can guarantee that after one prohibition is lifted European legislators, using humanistic arguments, will not try to break other prohibitions as well?

The legalization of euthanasia is opposed by representatives of traditional churches, such as the Catholics and the Orthodox. The cardinal differences between the Christian and liberal humanistic perspectives stems from a different understanding of life and death. Liberal humanism considers both to be above all a matter of an individual's rights: everyone is master of his own life, therefore, when he tires of his life he has the right to end it. According to the Christian tradition, God is master over life and death. For that reason the Orthodox Church considers suicide a grave sin and considers euthanasia to be suicide or murder,

depending on whether the patient is an active participant. The Orthodox Church "cannot recognise as morally acceptable the widely-spread attempt to legalise the so-called euthanasia, that is, the purposeful destruction of hopelessly ill patients (also by their own will). The request of a patient to speed up his death is sometimes conditioned by depression preventing him from assessing his condition correctly."

According to the liberal viewpoint, human life has an absolute value and illness and death are bad. According to the Christian tradition, earthly life has no absolute value, because Christians view it from the perspective of eternal life. Illness is considered an ordeal that can be a spiritual benefit, and death is a transition from one world to the next. An unreligious person, who does not believe in life after death, will strive to remain alive for as long as possible. This desire gives rise to attempts to extend life artificially, after all natural life functions have ceased. The Church disagrees: "the prolongation of life by artificial means, in which in fact only some organs continue to function, cannot be viewed as obligatory and in any case desirable task of medicine." The Church supports the cessation of costly, dangerous, extraordinary or disproportionate medical procedures, for in these cases the intention is not to cause death, but to acknowledge that it is inevitable.

An unreligious person is afraid of death, the idea of death, preparation for it, and fatal diseases. This gives rise to the idea that a swift death is to be preferred. Christians, on the other hand, consciously prepare for death and pray to be protected from sudden death, considering it a boon to have the opportunity to make preparation for what is a spiritually significant moment in a person's life. A terminally ill patient, receiving Christian care, may experience positive growth in his final days as he comes to understand his past life in a new way, and humbly faces eternity. These who choose suicide or euthanasia do not have this opportunity.

The euthanasia debate involves a number of conflicts between various traditional and liberal moral standards. One example is the concept of the role of the physician. According to the centuries-old Christian tradition the doctor's role is to cure disease and prolong life and certainly not to end it. In the words of the Hippocratic oath: "I will not give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it." A physician who aids a patient in ending his life even at the patient's own request, is acting as an executioner. We lose the moral foundation that has made the profession so respected and that makes a patient willing to entrust his life into a doctor's hands. Legalizing euthanasia erodes this trust. It also gives doctors the chance to become serial killers. A horrifying example of this is the American Jack Kevorkian, "Doctor Death". As a euthanasia activist he assisted in the death of 150 patients. In court he insisted that he acted out of purely humanitarian motives

to ease the suffering of the terminally ill. Another serial killer dressed in the white coat of a doctor was the Englishman Harold Shipman, who hanged himself in his prison cell in 2004. He had murdered 352 patients over the course of many years. According to the prosecution Shipman was mentally ill and did not act according to humanitarian principles. If doctors are granted a "license to kill", how can patients be protected from future Shipmans, and protect the doctors themselves from serial killers in their midst?

One of the moral conflicts inherent in the euthanasia debate revolves around the gradual change in the relationship between the elderly and their children. According to a UN presentation from 2002, the current aging of the population is without parallel in history. The number of elderly people (over the age of 60) is increasing and the number of children (under 15) is decreasing. By 2050 there will, for the first time, be more elderly than children in the world. The population will age faster in the West, where the birth rate is in decline and life expectancy is higher due to higher standards of living and medical advances. It is well known that an aging population places a greater financial burden on the shoulder of the young, because they will have to support an increasing number of elderly citizens. In these circumstances euthanasia might seem a necessity, so that resources would not have to be expended on supporting the elderly. We will continue to hear more and more about the right of the elderly to die, and die with dignity.

Conclusion. Blessing or Curse?

Sometimes it seems that we are living in a world turned upside down. A world where the moral foundation has been shattered, good has become evil and evil has become good, life has become death and death has become life. Values based on religious morals are still regarded as traditional by much of the world's population, but now they are being systematically ridiculed. New moral regulations that have no basis in tradition and are in conflict with human nature are being force-fed to large numbers of people. Millions of unborn children are robbed of life, and the elderly and infirm are presented with "the right to die". The basis of family, marriage, fidelity and the procurement of children is mocked. Deviant sexual behavior and "free love" are actively defended. The plague of godlessness has infected millions in the West: some are deprived of life, others not allowed to be born, yet more are allowed to "leave with dignity". But the humanistic atheists wash their hands with satisfaction and explain that the population problem in the industrialized nations of Europe and North America has been resolved. They refuse to see that reshaping values has led to the destruction of Western democracy.

Now a global social conflict looms, if the epidemic of liberalism spreads to other countries.

Every Western believer should consider what the future holds for himself, his offspring, his country and society. The faithful should bear the special responsibility they have been handed and engage in dialogue with the secular world view. If dialogue is not possible, then secularism should be actively resisted. The faithful should remind Western society that the very survival of the West depends on their choice of worldview. The crux of the choice cannot be more clearly expressed than it was by Moses addressing the Israelites: "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. [16]If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God[*] that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. [17]But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, [18]I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. [19]I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live." (Deut. 30:15–19)

ST. PETERSBURG 2008

COMMUNIQUÉ

14th theological discussions between the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, St. Petersburg, 18.-24.9.2008 on the Fourteenth Theological Discussion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, with the title "Freedom as Gift and Responsibility. Human Rights and Religious Education from the Christian Perspective"

The fourteenth theological discussion meeting between the delegations of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was held September 18th through 24th, 2008 in the building of the metropolitan of Alexander Nevsky Lavra.

The first theological discussion meeting was held in 1970 in Sinappi, Turku (Finland), the second in 1971 in Zagorsk (Russia/USSR), the third in 1974 in Järvenpää (Finland), the fourth in 1977 in Kiev (Ukraine/USSR), the fifth in 1980 in Turku (Finland), the sixth in 1983 in Leningrad (Russia/USSR), the seventh in 1986 in Mikkeli (Finland), the eighth in 1989 in Pyhtitsa (Piukhtitsa, Estonia/USSR) and Leningrad, the ninth in 1992 in Järvenpää (Finland), the tenth in 1995 in Kiev (Ukraine), the eleventh in 1998 in Lappeenranta (Finland), the twelfth in 2002 in Moscow (Russia) and the thirteenth in 2005 in Sinappi, Turku (Finland).

* * *

The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church included permanent member of the Holy Synod, His Eminence Metropolitan **VLADIMIR** of St. Petersburg and Ladoga (head of the delegation); His Eminence Bishop **HILARION** of Vienna and Austria; Vice Chairman of Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, Archpriest Vsevolod **CHAPLIN**, Archimandrite **YANNUARY**, Vicar of Prince Vladimir's Cathedral**,** Dean Vladimir **SOROKIN,** professor in the St. Petersburg Theological Academy; Kiev Theological Academy teacher Igumeni **KIRILL**, employee of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's Department for External Church Relations; Father Igor **VYSHANOV**, secretary of inter-Christian relations of Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Father Vladimir **HULAP**, priest of the Pavlovsky Holy Apostle-like Mary Magdalene congregation of St. Petersburg Diocese; teacher at the Moscow and St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Father Dmitry **YUREVITCH** and

employee of Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, Moscow Theological Academy teacher Yelena S. **SPERANSKAYA**.

The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church delegation consisted of The Most Rev. Jukka **PAARMA**, Archbishop of Turku and Finland (head of the delegation); the Right Rev. Dr. Voitto **HUOTARI**, Bishop of Mikkeli; the Right Rev. Dr. Matti **REPO**, Bishop of Tampere; Professor Gunnar af **HÄLLSTRÖM** of the Faculty of Theology in the Åbo Akademi; Professor Jaana **HALLAMAA** of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Helsinki; Docent Jyri **KOMULAINEN** of the University of Helsinki; Rev. Heta **HURSKAINEN** and, as an advisor, Professor Antti **LAATO** of the Faculty of Theology of Åbo Akademi.

Invited by Russian Orthodox Church and participating in the meeting as observers were Bishop Aarre **KUUKAUPPI**; Dean, General Secretary Alexander **PRILUTSKY** and Dean Olav **PANCHU** representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia.

As advisors of the Russian Orthodox Church were Dean Alexander **Sorokin**, chairman of the Publications Department of the Diocese of St. Petersburg; Dean Georgy **Schmid**, teacher of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy; Dean Vyacheslav **Harinov**, Vicar of the congregation dedicated to the Icon of Our Lady the Joy of All Sorrowing; Dean Georgy **Joffe**, employee of the Mission Department of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and Communications Officer Anastasya **Koskello** of the Zivaja Voda magazine of the diocese.

As ex-officio members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, present were Rev. Dr. Risto **Cantell,** Executive Director of the Church Department for International Relations; Rev. Dr. Kimmo **Kääriäinen**, director of the Church Research Centre; Communications Director Tuomo **Pesonen** of the Church's Communications Centre; Dean Heikki **Jääskeläinen**, secretary to the Archbishop; Dr. Kaisamari **Hintikka**, acting executive secretary for Theology of the Department for International Relations, and Rev. Timo **Rosqvist**, secretary of the Archbishop's chancellery.

Interpreters in the discussions were Margarita *Kyllesten*, Marina *Latschinoff,* Tarja *Leppäaho* and Ekaterina *Vlasova.* The secretariat of the discussions consisted of the Chief of Protocol Ivan *Sudosa* of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and Fr. Igor *Katayev* and Tamara *Dontsova*, employees of the St. Petersburg office Department for International Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, and administrative assistant Minna *Väliaho* of the Church Department for International Relations.

The opening ceremonies of the discussions were held on Thursday, September 18th, 2008. When opening the discussions, Metropolitan Vladimir read out loud the greeting sent by Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and all of Russia, in which His Holiness presented the following:

"The freedom of man, the theme of our freedom to choose between good and evil has been one of the central issues of Christian theology ever since the ancient church fathers' era. Today, this theme has become especially topical. The standards of world views and the individual models of behaviour dictated by the secularised world are often in conflict with the Christian view of man, the Christian view of society and moral values.

"With the help of proper education and training, the young generation will become the foundation of the kind of society that can orientate in its life according to truth and ideals of good. That kind of society will be able to show its faith, mercy and ability for compassion along with striving for worldly success. It is called to show tolerance toward different opinions, and an ability to defend its own crucial principles and ideals. In this connection, I would like to remind us of the words of a Russian contender, Saint Theophan the Recluse: "Education is the holiest of all deeds"."

Concerning the discussions that were about to begin, Metropolitan Vladimir noted among other things:

"The topic of the present discussion on doctrine contains a group of issues, which we are handling for the first time and which have an extremely great significance to the modern Christianity that is facing the challenges of the secularised society. The freedom, donated by God often gets distorted to egoism serving the satisfaction of man's sinful tendencies. By appealing to human rights, the modern world is cultivating viewpoints whose content differs completely from Christian teaching. All this cannot but have an impact on the education of the growing generation. Its spiritual health will mould the future of our world."

Archbishop Jukka Paarma reminded us that 30 years had lapsed from the death of Metropolitan Nikodim on September 5th, and on September 17th one hundred years from the birth of Archbishop Martti Simojoki, both of whom had a crucial impact on initiating the discussions nearly 40 years ago.

"In their time, Archbishop Martti Simojoki and Metropolitan Nikodim were bold church leaders, who looked and saw into the future and wanted to build it on

apostolic faith and the common tradition of the church. Their example encourages us also today to follow the road of truth and love shown by our Lord Jesus Christ.

"When the will of both our churches is to build on the basis of apostolic faith and the Church's common tradition, and when we want to consider the word of God given in the Holy Bible our supreme authority, there is a common ground for our discussions", said Archbishop Jukka Paarma.

In the opening ceremony, greetings were also presented by Russian Federation's Consul General of Turku A.V. Safronov, Finland's St. Petersburg Consul Leena Liski, and Chief of Religious Affairs L.S. Musienko read the greeting of St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Ivanovna Matvienko.

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During the discussions, the members of the delegations took turns in delivering morning prayers according to the Lutheran and Orthodox tradition.

On Friday, September 19th, the delegations had a moment of prayer together in the Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg church at the cemetery of the Church of the Icon of Our Lady of Smolensk. Vicar Victor Moscowsky hosted the dinner of the delegations.

On Saturday September 20th, Metropolitan Vladimir delivered the Eve of the Birth of the Mother of God evening service in the Holy Trinity church of the Lavra. Lavra's Vice Director, Archimandrite Nazari hosted a dinner of the delegations.

On Sunday, September 21st, the members of the delegations prayed in the liturgy of the celebration of the Birth of the Mother of God in the cathedral of Kazan and in the Lutheran mass celebrated in St. Mary church. The heads of the delegation gave sermons. Vice Director of the cathedral of Kazan, Vicar Pavel Krasnotzvetov hosted a lunch in honour of the delegations. In the evening, the delegations got acquainted with the church and activities of Pushkino Lutheran congregation with Vicar Fyodor Tulyny and the Sofia Orthodox church with Vicar Gennady Zverev, who also hosted a dinner at the congregation centre of his church.

On Monday, September 22nd, Finland's Consul General Olli Perheentupa received the delegations at his residence, after which the delegations got acquainted with the church of the Icon of Our Lady of Vladimir and enjoyed a dinner hosted by Vicar Vladimir Fomenko.

On Tuesday, September 23rd, St Petersburg Governor V.I. Matvienko's representative M.E. Oseyevsky organised a reception for the delegation in Smolna administrative centre, and afterward, there was an official reception of the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga Vladimir in the Golden Room of the Lavra.

On the day that we received news of the tragic shooting incident in Kauhajoki, Finland, those participating in the discussions honoured the memory of the shooting victims with a moment of silence and prayed for those that had been affected by the event.

On Wednesday, September 24th, the discussion documents were signed in a festive ceremony in the Blue Room of the building of the Metropolitan of St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra, with Metropolitan Vladimir and Archbishop Jukka Paarma both giving a speech.

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During the discussions, the following presentations connected with the general theme "Freedom as Gift and Responsibility, Human Rights and Religious Education from Christian Perspective" were held:

Archimandrite Yannuary (Ivlyev) and Professor Antti Laato: "Freedom as Gift and Responsibility in the Bible"

Dean Vsevolod Chaplin: "Russian Orthodox Church and Human Rights"

Professor Jaana Hallamaa: "Human Rights in Light of Christianity"

Fr. Vladimir Hulap: "Religious Education from Christian Perspective"

Docent Jyri Komulainen: "Religion Education from Christian Perspective"

The results of the discussions have been presented in the attached summary.

* * *

The Fourteenth Theological Discussions of the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland were held in cordial Christian spirit of openness and mutual respect. At the conclusion of their work, the delegations thanked God and expressed their unanimous view that the discussions have been fruitful and the mutual understanding of the churches has further increased. That is why the Theological Discussions need to continue.

St. Petersburg, September 24th, 2008

Jukka Paarma
Archbishop of Turku
and Finland

Vladimir
Metropolitan of St. Petersburg
and Ladoga

14th Theological Discussions between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
St. Petersburg, September 18th–24th, 2008

ABSTRACT

The delegations of the theological discussions noted at the beginning of the discussion that the context of Russian Orthodox Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the circumstances and historic backgrounds of Finnish and Russian societies and the position of the churches and their possibilities to influence in their countries are different. However, we can note that the churches' theological views on human dignity and human rights and right to religious education are close to each other.

I Human rights

1. Each person is created by God. God has given us all reason and conscience. That is why people have the ability to distinguish between good and bad (Genesis 2:7; Proverbs 20:27). The human dignity is based on their being unique and irreplaceable as creations of God. God created people in his own image and according to his likeness (Genesis 1:26) – not to be slaves but free servants of God. God has given people the task of cultivating and cherishing the creation and of loving God more than anything else and their neighbours as themselves. They still have this same task.

2. God's incarnation in Jesus Christ expresses God's love for the world he created and for the human beings (John 3:16). In the incarnation, Christ unites his divine nature with human nature and makes salvation possible. As images of God, humans are called to act according to love and mercy. When following Christ, the incarnated God, who has suffered for human beings, we are to make the sacrifice of loving our neighbour. (Phil. 2:5–11).

3. Both rights and duties are involved in being a human being. Based on creation, all people must be treated with respect and according to their human dignity.

Human rights are inalienable rights that belong to all humans, and societies must secure the implementation of these rights.

4. When implementing human rights and freedoms, Christians must follow the example of their Lord and be faithful to God's commandments (Mark 10:29–31) that obligate them also to be responsible for their neighbours and the society.

5. Freedom of religion is a basic human right. The special duty of the state is to create prerequisites for practice of religion both in private and in a community.

6. It is important for Christians to be able to confess their faith in society and implement faith and love in different sectors of society (Gal. 5:6).

7. If legislation in society interprets citizens' basic rights in conflict with the word of God or prevents them from being implemented, the Church and Christians must, following the instructions of the apostle, obey more God than humans (Acts 4:19–20, 5:29).

8. In addition to freedom of religion, human rights include right to life, basic social, political and economic rights, for example freedom to assemble and to organise, freedom of speech and right to work and subsistence. The duty of the Church is to defend the human rights of all people and to emphasize, in addition to the rights, also the importance of fulfilling one's duties according to the principle of reciprocity (Matt. 7:12; Rom. 13:8).

9. Our Churches are to continue the discussion on human value and human rights. Also the issue of power and use of force was brought up in our discussions. It is good to examine these issues closer in our next theological discussions.

II "Religious Education and Teaching of Religion from a Christian Perspective"

1. Our Saviour considered children as an example of faith, gave them a very special place near him and called for us to be like children (Matt. 19:13–15; Matt. 11:25). According to Christ's example and following his commandment (Matt. 28:18–20), our churches are to take care of the Christian education of children in the spirit of the gospel.

2. The goal of Christian education and teaching based on Christian anthropology, is to help us to create the right kind of relationship with God, our neighbours and environment (Deut. 6:20–25; Psalms 78:2–7). Relaying a certain amount of knowledge is part of Christian education, but its goal is especially the overall development of a human being's personality (Prov. 3:13–18).

3. God has given us conscience, the ability to distinguish between good and evil (Rom. 2:14–15). Due to sin, understanding this may easily become blurred and that is why people need the guidance given by the word of God. Christian education is based on the values of the gospel and it strives to rouse and enhance the voice of conscience in us (Eph. 6:4).

4. The church must have the right and possibility to actively participate in creating and assessing the value base of society also at the stage when an individual's value system is being formed – in our childhood and youth. Each child has the right to have answers to the big questions about God, origin of the world and meaning of life. Our churches are aware of their responsibility of getting the growing generation acquainted with the answers that Christian faith offers to these basic questions of life (Eccl. 12:1–7).

5. Each culture has been influenced by the religious traditions involved in it in history. The message of Christianity has significantly impacted the development of our culture in two millennia. Religious education in schools helps children and youth to be aware of the Christian roots of our society.

6. Christian education and teaching of religion are a process of relaying the Christian world view, tradition, ethics and lifestyle. Tradition is one of the basic principles in the development of civilisation and culture. Tradition is not a stagnant state but a creative process. Relaying the Christian tradition creates and upholds a safe atmosphere of hope that supports children in the development of their personalities. Knowing and adopting one's own tradition

gives a firm basis for respecting other people's traditions (Lev. 19:33–34; Deut. 10:17–19).

7. Freedom of religion is a basic human right. Each child has the right to religious education that corresponds to the child's own religious traditions. Information about religion cannot be taught in schools completely impartially because the teaching always reflects some world view and value system. Accepting religious education in the curriculum does not lessen the non-religious character of school. A distinction must be made between the baptismal teaching of the Church and the school's religious education. Schoolchildren should have the possibility to obtain profound knowledge of their own religious tradition and basic knowledge of other traditions.

8. The educational goals of public school and Church can be in harmony with each other. In many European countries, such as Finland, schools offer teaching of one's own religion in the spirit of positive freedom of religion. Getting to know religious traditions is in line with this principle.

9. Christian education supports the ethical values of society in the spirit of responsible freedom and creates the prerequisites for the encounter of religions and different value systems. The duty of Christian churches is to be actively involved in solving inter-cultural conflicts and support reconciliation between and peaceful coexistence of cultures.

FREEDOM AS GIFT AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE BIBLE

Archimandrite Yannuary (Ivlyev)

1 The Old Testament

1.1 A Free God grants freedom: Exodus - Passover

Arguably the very core of Old Testament belief are the words uttered by God to Moses at Mount Sinai, the words which begin the Decalogue: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:2–3). The entire Bible is a testament to God, who delivers people out of slavery into freedom. The departure of the people of Israel from Egypt was preceded by a revelation, in which God revealed His name to Moses (Exodus 3:14). In this name, God manifested Himself as a perfectly free God. In this name He gives the promise of His continued presence and protection, but avoids committing Himself in definitions and in the forms of presence and apparition. The free God gives the people of Israel information about Himself in an unpredictable and wondrous story about journeying towards freedom. Moses and his people must set out trusting in God, who revealed His name and who calls them and shows them the road. On this road, step by step, they come to know who this God is who wishes to exist for Israel. They will be with Him even when their conception of His presence is completely different, because God, even when He is bound by the covenant with Israel, is simultaneously always completely free, and impossible to domineer.

So that they might know God's closeness and presence, His chosen ones must always be prepared to depart. The promise of presence expressed through the name JHWH can only be fulfilled when people are prepared to cast off their habits and connections to follow God's voice. This voice calls them towards freedom, on a journey to an open and unknown future, which is nonetheless illumined by God's promise: "Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go" (Genesis 28:15).

The whole history of the people of Israel found in the Old Testament is the history of the communication between Israel and its God, in which JHWH explains His name. The story of the departure from Egypt already demonstrated that the freedom they seek is defined by God's judgment and mercy, which is remembered in the annual celebration of Passover. Israel must always remember that freedom is a gift from God: "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance" (Exodus 12:14).

1.2 Analogy with creation

The affective images in the story of Israel's crossing the Red Sea can be associated with the story of Creation. Drawing obvious parallels between these two stories is part of basic theology. Parting the waters and forming dry land (Genesis 1:6–7) was the beginning of creating all land and life on the planet. A similar parting of the waters took place as the Israelites left Egypt. God opened up a path across the sea. As with the creation of the earth, He made a space in the waters for his own creations. In the beginning, God called everything into being with his Word, and later called his own people to freedom. And, just as was said of Creation: "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31), and when achieving freedom, Moses praises God with joyful song (Exodus 15). In this case, freedom is compared with Creation.

1.3 The trials of freedom

For the people of Israel, however, freedom did not open up the path to Eden, but to the desert, to a place where there was neither water nor food. In a world of sin, freedom is always linked to temptation. Because in this world freedom comes with responsibility, it can also be a burden, a bad thing that one might wish to be rid of, to attain release from freedom. This is clearly illustrated by the Israelites' grumbling. The land of slavery, Egypt, is later seen in a positive light. There people sat around full pots of meat and there was plenty of bread, but now the people are dying of starvation and thirst. "'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt… for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Exodus 16:3). This complaining and doubt form one of the leading ideas in both the stories about the plagues of the desert and the coming history of the whole nation of Israel. But God does not allow His people to die in the desert. He gives them life, even where there should be starvation and thirst. This is illustrated by the story about

manna, the bread that was essential for the Israelites' survival (Exodus 16:15) and was impossible to preserve. Therefore the Israelites had to trust day to day that God would provide them with what was necessary for life. In other words, Israel lives as a result of His daily recurring blessing. And when the Israelites refuse this bread and demand some other, allegedly better, nourishment, they are met with death (Numbers 11:33). Only the one true God is the savior who grants freedom. Anyplace else the Israelites seek salvation brings death instead of life.

1.4 Imprisonment in a world of sin and death. Relinquishing one's self to God's care.

Living in a world of sin is connected to a constant feeling of imprisonment. The Old Testament is full of starvation for freedom, hope for salvation from a world of evil and violence. This is what many of David's psalms and the Old Testament prophets' writings are about. In this context it is clear that salvation can come only from God: "O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1–2). "I called to the Lord out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice" (Jonah 2:3). We repeatedly hear hopeful prayers about freedom: freedom from enemies, freedom from the whale's belly, freedom from evil in general…

It is important to note that in the Old Testament, everything that happens between God and people, *His* people, happens on this side of the grave. The dead have no need of freedom, they cannot hope, they cannot pray, they cannot praise God. God is the God of the living and only the living can praise God: "For Sheol cannot thank you, death cannot praise you; those who go down to the Pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living, they thank you" (Isaiah 38:18–19). Only in a very few Old Testament texts is there the seedling of hope for life after death (Isaiah 26:19; Job 19:25–27). Gradually, the idea matures that the Lord, who has demonstrated his dominion over infinity, also has the power to restore life to the just who clamor to him: "The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up" (1 Samuel 2:6). The hope connected with the name JHWH, which contains the promise of justice and freedom, was not extinguished throughout Israel's history.

1.5 Responsibility before God and one's neighbors. The Law.

The name JHWH includes one memory that is just as important as the Exodus: the memory that God strives for a special relationship with Israel. JHWH wants to be Israel's only God, and demands that Israel recognize Him as the only God. Nevertheless – incredible but true – the Israelites often do not notice their special ties with God and God's care for them. From the moment that God called Israel out of slavery and into freedom, they turned away from Him and towards all sorts of false gods. They should have become free sons of God, but they subjugated themselves time and again, enslaving themselves to new masters. The prophet Hosea used the metaphor of the unfaithful wife to describe Israel: she "went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the Lord" (Hosea 2:15). And God, who has given Israel life and freedom, is concerned that His people not misuse this life and freedom. This is discussed in the Book of Exodus. Its theme is the history of the law of Sinai, which expresses God's will. This grand collection of stories contains many instructions about justice and service. But it also contains a group of commandments separate from the rest. These are the so-called laws of the Ten Commandments, found in Exodus 1–17 and repeated in Deuteronomy 6–21. This group of commandments begins by recalling the freedom granted to Israel: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exodus 20:2). Israel's history makes plain that the bearer of the name JHWH is the only saving and liberating God. After this, how can Israel take other gods beside Him and bow to them? The commandments that follow the First Commandment frame the consequences of this historical attempt at freedom. They define what henceforth cannot exist in Israel. "You shall have no other gods before* me"; "You shall not make for yourself an idol..."; "You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God..." etc.

In a special position "between the two tablets" is the commandment to observe the day of rest. In speaking of a peaceful day free of all work, Deuteronomy 5:15 recalls the enslavement in Egypt and the freedom granted through the Exodus. Every seventh day is meant to be a sign of the covenant between God and the land that he created, a sign of the freedom that God gave his people. For that reason all beings – people, slaves, animals – should be free and at ease on that day

It is no coincidence that the commandment to observe the day of rest is placed halfway through the Ten Commandments, between the people's relationship with the God who saved them and the relationship with others whom He has saved. Sanctifying God and His name, and protecting man, his life and his freedom, are closely connected. The commandment about attitudes towards elderly, helpless parents, the commandments about the inviolability of human life,

family and possessions are all commandments found on the second tablet and they demonstrate that God will not allow the abuse of life, home, liberty – i.e., everything that He has given to Israel. These commandments remind us of our responsibility to ensure that our neighbors enjoy the same benefits of the gift given by JHWH as we do.

1.6 Freedom and faith. Abraham

In the story of Abraham's calling we see freedom in a slightly different light. These stories reflect Israel itself, the doubts and temptations that defined its historical path. "Now the Lord said to Abraham, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you'" (Genesis 12:1). The Lord's call detaches Abraham from everything that gave him shelter and subsistence. But this liberation from accustomed bonds is a departure into freedom, where a boundless number of possibilities are opened up. God summons Abraham into the unknown just like He did with Moses (Exodus, chapter 3). Responsibility for the choice lies entirely on Abraham's shoulders. Freedom itself becomes a test. On this path, Abraham has only one guarantee of the correct direction, faith in God, who made great promises to Abraham. The path of faith is the path of freedom and responsibility. This motif plays an important part in the New Testament, especially in the writings of the apostle Paul.

1.7 Freedom and responsibility in the story of the creation of man

The theme of freedom and responsibility is also notable in the story of Creation. The Old Testament explicates how from all peoples the Lord summoned Abraham, how He led the fathers out of Egypt and forged the covenant with them on Sinai. Nevertheless, the Bible does not begin with these stories. It begins with a tale of prehistory (Genesis 1:1–4a), the creation of the world and man. "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'" (Genesis 1:26). God created man after careful consideration ("let us make" reflects council and thought). Mankind is given the freedom of rulers of the earth. It is clear that this tale differs from the ancient Babylonian myth of the creation of man. Whereas the Babylonian myth speaks of people as slaves created to serve gods, in the Biblical creation story man is not slave to the gods. He is himself a master, created in God's image and likeness. He

is empowered by God, summoned to earth the fulfill God's dominion. But this high status also entails responsibility before God. Even though man has freedom, he has not been given the right to fulfill his own will on earth, instead, he is obligated to fulfill God's will which is intended for the benefit of all creation and to create the kingdom of God on earth. "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Everything that left the Lord was good, and therefore, in God's eyes, is fundamentally good.

In the story of paradise, God places the man He has created in the flowering garden to tend and protect it (Genesis 2:15). He must act like a gardener. This work must be careful, creative and responsible.

2 The Gospel

2.1 A New Departure

It is not necessary to state that all the Old Testament texts that in one way or another deal with the theme of freedom and responsibility (the Creation, the Calling of Abraham, Exodus, the Law-Giving, Wandering in the Desert) are, in the New Testament, considered to be models, *typoi*, for what God created in Jesus Christ when "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near" (Mark 1:15). The Old Testament is, as I pointed out at the beginning of this presentation, focused on the theme of Departure. The New Departure became the main theme of the New Testament. This is especially clear in the Gospel of John. A quarter of a century ago it was convincingly demonstrated that the central node of the complicated chiastic structure of this Gospel is the episode of walking on water (John 6:16–21).[16] This artfully constructed scene, rich in theological symbolism, symbolically and typologically reflects Israel's departure through the sea. Jesus' disciples set out to sea (epi tēn thalassan), where they were threatened by danger and they returned to dry land (epi tēs gēs), or, just as JHWH led Israel through the sea, so the disciples – like the new Israel – are led by God's name become flesh – Egō eimi. Those who realize the truth about God's becoming flesh in Jesus Christ receive freedom (John 8:32). This is the highest order of freedom: freedom

16 Peter F. Ellis. *The Genius of John.* – Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1984; Peter F. Ellis. *Inclusion, Chiasm, and the Division of the Fourth Gospel,* in St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, 1999, Vol. 43, No. 3–4, 269–338.

from sin and its consequences, i.e., death. This is what John tirelessly repeats in his Gospel and his letters.

2.2 Freedom and repentance

Jesus Christ's first words in the Gospel of Mark are his exhortation: 'Repent, and believe in the good news.' (en tō$_i$ euaggeliō$_i$). The good news consists of the knowledge that God's kingdom is drawing near (ēggiken), i.e., is already present where Jesus Christ is (Mark 1:15). Jesus Christ's message regarding the dawning of the eschatological kingdom of God and the call to this new order through repentance is the foundation of evangelical ethics. After all, God's kingdom is above all a kingdom of freedom. And repentance (metanoia) means – analogously with Abraham's departure – a departure from the life and way of thinking to which we are accustomed, stepping onto the path following Jesus Christ, which is enticing and full of ordeals. Repentance is a free action towards freedom. People are held back from repentance by enslavement to material goods and the worries of this world. The concept of *repentance* is often used in the Old Testament, especially by the prophets urging Israel to return to its God and His Testament. But the approaching kingdom of God that Jesus Christ is bearing witness to demands movement forward, not back! A determined call to repentance was central to the preaching of John the Baptist. However, his concept of repentance was different from Jesus Christ's. He does not want the people to revert back to what was earlier considered good and just. He would rather take his people *forward*. For this reason Jesus Christ does not require people to *repent*, but to *follow* Him. Through his words and deeds he illustrates these concepts.

2.3 Freedom from riches and worries

Slavery to mammon can prevent people from following Christ. In many of his speeches and parables, Jesus Christ strongly criticized desire for material wealth, accumulating treasures and the worries that come with them. He is probably not condemning wealth or the wealthy in and of themselves, as happened in certain marginalized groups and Christian heretical movements, such as the Ebionites (2nd–4th centuries). They renounced property and were of the opinion that a rich person is automatically rejected by God and a beggar is blessed because of his poverty. Woe is predicted not for the rich man, but for the man who wants nothing from life but to be rich (Luke 6:24, cf. Luke 16:25). He who is satisfied with his wealth can expect nothing from God.

The rich man was mad (Luke 12:16–21) because he thought he could **live** by his fortune. Everywhere the question is posed: Can a person become free by trying to hope for and guarantee life for himself by hoarding earthly possessions? "Go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor" (Matthew 19:21). Well, this is hardly a necessary injunction for everyone at all times. This was a concrete piece of advice in a concrete situation to a rich youth, who could not give up his riches, because he considered them, like the rabbis, to be a reward for his piety. By giving up his property he would at the same time give up the piousness he had earned. But repentance and following Christ without denying one's own "merits" or "piousness" is not possible. The principle is as follows: it is not about riches in and of themselves, but the circumstances of the rich pious youth can be repeated in countless variations.

Overall, Jesus Christ's attitude towards wealth is fundamentally different from that of the rabbis and, e.g., at Qumran, where ownership was entirely forbidden. Jesus' view of worldly riches is evident in his teaching about the kingdom of God and his attitude towards the First Commandment. To what should man dedicate his life? Does he understand himself as a creation of God, or does he create his own life with "dishonest wealth" (Luke 16:9), which goes away (eklipē$_i$) (Luke 16:9)? To him it is correct to say, "You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:24).

We could say the same thing about Jesus Christ's words about the worries of this world. Jesus Christ's sermon is not part of the ancient critique of shallow and trivial socio-economic wealth. His sermon brings new joyous tidings of God's approaching kingdom and the freedom that a principled rejection of enslavement to worldly things brings. Freedom – being a beggar in Christ – satisfies all thirst and removes all worries. God's kingdom is attainable only to those who are no longer inwardly dependent on anything, not on riches, or power, or justice or privileges: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3).

2.4 Jesus Christ's attitude towards the commandments of the Old Testament

In the Sermon on the Mount there are two perspectives on Jesus Christ's attitude towards the Law of Moses. On the one hand he confirms that the Ten Commandments are the unconditional will of God. On the other hand, Jesus Christ is critical of considering the Ten Commandments to be juridically binding. Jesus Christ's attitude to the Ten Commandments is best expressed in Matthew 5:18: "For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one

stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (panta genētai or "until everything has happened" or "until everything ends"). In other words, the Law with all its commandments are a part of this world until eschatological events transform "the law and the prophets". Later, after Jesus appears, "the time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15). He himself did not come to abolish the law or the prophets… but to fulfill. (Matthew 5:17). In the Gospel of Matthew the verb "to fulfill" is an eschatological *terminus technicus* that refers to the fulfillment of the Old Testament's eschatological prophecies. In other words, Jesus Christ urges the fulfillment of the Law as the prophets had predicted for the time of salvation when the Law expressing God's will would be written on people's hearts: "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:31–34). The fact that with Christ came the time of salvation and the fulfillment of the Law according to this prophecy is confirmed elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g., 2 Corinthians 3:36, "human hearts" and "ministers…not of letter but of spirit"). In this way the Law's eschatological fulfillment took place already when the Savior arrived. The law of the letter, which is juridical law, will be revoked in principle (eschatologically), even though it will continue to operate (chronologically) as long as the world continues to exist. But where ever Jesus Christ is, instead of the Law the Law's antitheses, i.e., Jesus Christ's commandments, are in effect.

The Law of Moses reflects the life of its **own** time, in which sin and the inevitable presence of evil were dominant. For this reason the Law is an expression of justice and different social systems and structures. Jesus Christ's commandments differ from the Law **qualitatively**, antithetically. These commandments are not connected to any sort of new static judicial system. Their goal is not to build this world, or to improve humans in this world, but to fulfill the living and dynamic will of the living God. This will manifests itself in different ways in different situations. Sometimes Jesus demands adherence to the Old Testament commandments (Mark 7:9–13), the most important of which he considers the dual commandment to love (Mark 12:28–31). Sometimes he exhorts us to exceed them or even act against them, paying attention to the original order of creation (Mark 10:6–9). Sometimes he speaks of the necessity of adhering to earthly justice (Matthew 22:17–21), at other times of the "justice" of the eschatological kingdom (Matthew 19:12; Luke 14:26). Only repentance and following Christ can make a person open to receiving God's will, and make him free both with respect to earthly justice, i.e., the law of the Old Testament and the "justice" of creation, as

well as the "justice" of God's kingdom. In Christ a person is free. His decisions are living, dynamic and free, because they fulfill God's free and living will.

2.5 Jesus Christ's attitude towards earthly justice

The relationship to earthly powers and earthly justice is very important for the theme of freedom and responsibility. On the one hand, Jesus Christ considers it his responsibility to the pay the tax that in turn supports the police and state justice system, but on the other hand He calls for the rejection of justice and power, i.e., the principles of societal life: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also" (Matthew 5:38–39). The Old Testament phrase "you have heard" reflects the *ius talionis*, the basic principle of ancient criminal justice. But its antithesis ("but I say to you") radically removes the protection afforded by criminal justice. How is this possible? Probably not by terminating or reforming the police or justice system, but only by changing the person for whom Jesus' words are intended. This abnegation of justice is similar to Jesus' followers' abnegation of power (Mark 10:42–45). The abnegation of justice and power, just like the abnegation of marriage and family is only possible in the kingdom of God that arrives with Jesus Christ. He fulfils his own kingdom, that is "not of this world" by serving his neighbors, not by serving justice through courts of law or by shows of power and force.

How can this abnegation of justice and power, or passive rejection of the organs of state be reconciled with the obligation to pay tax, which is the active recognition of the state? These different views are connected by the idea that "God's kingdom is at hand". The kingdom is already here, but for now it is secret and as difficult to perceive as a mustard seed. For this reason, earthly institutions of justice and power must be retained and they must be supported until the **clear** arrival of the kingdom. But he who has already recognized God's kingdom and entered it, receives freedom. That person is free to recognize the state, because he is also free to resist it. The resistance happens in a completely different way than it does for people of "this world".

3 Paul the Apostle

3.1 The call to freedom in Jesus Christ

It can be stated without undue exaggeration that the theme of freedom and responsibility is the central theme of the apostle Paul's letters. The same ideas that in the Gospels are expressed using parables, discussions and teachings are expressed by Paul in the form of theoretical theological discourse. This is an inexhaustible theme that has been the subject of thousands of pages of research. For this reason we will focus on the basics.

"For freedom (eleutheria) Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). It was the letters of Paul in particular that provided a foundation for the teaching of the catechism according to which Christ set us free from the power of sin, law and death. Death and the law were considered the consequences of sin. "Sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin" (Romans 5:12). At the same time, "yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses" (Romans 5:14). Although the death existed already before the Law, the law gave to it a new strength: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (1. Cor. 15:56). In the writings of the apostle Paul it is necessary to separate sin *par excellence* and "sins" in the conventional sense as transgressions of the Law. Sin is an ontological concept, a state of separation from God as the source of life. This concept (just like death and the Law) can be personified and for this reason Paul can speak of the power of sin, the slavery of sin, conquering sin, etc. Death and the law can also be described using metaphors: death as a monster with a stinger, the Law as a prison guard (efrouroumetha syggkleiomenoi, Gal 3:23) or a disciplinarian (paidagōgos, Gal 3:24). The atonement on the cross reminds humanity of its new freedom from the power of sin and death. "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57).

In more concrete terms, when Paul writes about freedom he means a strict dichotomy between Christianity and Judaism, as well as within Christianity. For him, freedom from sin also means freedom from the Law, which is the consequence of sin. The Law divided people, it was a "dividing wall" that was broken down by the cross (Ephesians 2:14–16; Gal 2:18). But freedom in Christ is more than freedom **from the Law**. It places man **above the Law**. The apostle Paul himself often in his proclamation made use of his freedom to either take account of the Law or ignore it. He asks, rhetorically, "Am I not free?" (eleutheros, 1 Cor 9:1). Of course he is free. He has many rights (exousiai) and freedoms (1 Cor 9:4–6)

which he uses broadly "for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor 9:23).

3.2 Abuses of freedom

The freedom that the apostle Paul emphasizes does not refer to the free will that leads logically to the abnegation of life and existence itself. "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another." (Gal 5:13-15) The "self-indulgence" that Paul refers to here is man's sinful selfish tendencies. Living in self-indulgence is not the same as living in sin without Christ and God, bearing "fruit for death" (Romans 7:5). But a believer who has been baptized does not live in self-indulgence, but lives by the spirit (Gal 5:16). "How can we who died to sin go on living in it?" (Rom 6:2)

Occasionally the apostle Paul has to strongly criticize the "theoretical" justification of arbitrariness. This justification of arbitrariness happened amongst the so-called Libertinists, who claimed that "all things are lawful" to them (1 Cor 6:12). Linking primitive dualism to magical perceptions of the sacraments of Baptism and Communion led to behavior that was not constrained by any moral norms. Man is a stomach – this was the view of the Libertinists (1 Cor 6:13). The apostle Paul disagrees: man is not a stomach, but a body, which is part of Christ's body (1 Cor 6:15). And in Christ's body everything is harmoniously joined by the divine gift of love. There is no room for egotism or fundamental unchastity. If we look realistically at the people of this world, we understand the many "catalogs of vices" that appear in the apostle Paul's letters. These lists of vices partly reflect the universal experience of communal living, and are in part defined by biblical anthropology or societal circumstances. Their aim is not only the strengthening of the internal morals of the church, but also the successful spreading of the gospel. Christians must "behave properly towards outsiders" (1 Thessalonians 4:12).

3.3 The paradox of holiness

The statement about freedom can nevertheless seem contradictory when freedom is restricted by moral norms. On the one hand, the apostle Paul often refers to Christians as "holy". On the other hand, he calls them to be sanctified: "this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thes 4:3). On the one hand, Christians

are “unleavened”. On the other hand, they must be cleansed of “old yeast” (1 Cor 5:7). On the one hand, freedom from sin, on the other hand the exhortation “do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies… No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness” (Rom 6:12–13). This conflict is in appearance only. To Paul there was no conflict. This is explained by the fact that salvation (sōtēria) has both an objective and a subjective side. Objectively, people are saved (or their sins are atoned) through Christ’s cross. They are free. But to achieve this freedom they must exert subjective effort: they must go after freedom. The door to the prison is open, but freedom can be attained only by walking through the door.

3.4 Relationship with earthly power

As a realist, the apostle Paul understood perfectly that Christians not only must, but they are obligated (as a part of missionary work, for example) to communicate with the people of this world: “not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world” (1 Cor 5:10). In addition, as a citizen of the Roman Empire, Paul shows respect towards its state and institutions. This he states in Rom 13:1–7. These words of Paul’s are famous and, unfortunately, they have historically been used to justify the godless acts of state powers. Nevertheless, Paul’s letters do not only address respect for state authority, but also include a cautious critique of state religiosity. This is because often in antiquity, rulers were worshipped as gods, as happened in Babylon, Egypt as well as Rome. Paul in turn is trying to put state authority in its proper place: “for there is no authority except from God” (Rom 13:1) (hypo theou). This is about the assumption about the subordination of authority: authority is not god, it is hypo theou! Authority is not the lord, but the servant of God (Rom 13:4), a slave given by God for the good of mankind, which must humbly fulfill its Lord God’s will. But what if it is an insubordinate servant? Paul naturally does not advocate active resistance of authority in such cases, but also forbids the absolutism of earthly power.

3.5 Criteria for a Christian’s responsible activity in the Church

As was earlier made apparent, not to live “subject to the law” is not the same as living in “self-indulgence”. Christians must act led by the Holy Spirit: “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law” (Gal 5:18). The life of the apostle Paul’s church is charismatic. Christians must live inspired by the Holy Spirit: “Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal

5:16). However, the external signs of inspiration and rapture but rarely testify to charismatic inspiration. “No one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says ‘Let Jesus be cursed!’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3). For this reason Paul presents a genuine criterion for charismatics: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor 12:7). He writes in almost all of his letters about this “good” for building the Church into the Body of Christ: “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Cor 8:1); “those who prophesy build up the church” (1 Cor 14:3–5); “since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for building up the church” (1 Cor 14:12), etc. Such persistent advice was necessary, because Christian communities were divided and poorly organized. In every case, the criterion for a person’s activity in the church is his charisma, the gift of grace from the free God. A Christian’s duty is to be grateful for this gift of grace and to give a healthy assessment of himself in proportion to the gift: “do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but think with sober judgment (sōfronein), each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned” (Rom 12:3). In the later pastoral letters we find new criteria for valuable and responsible activity in the church. The church’s circumstances have changed and the new situation requires new solutions. In this situation, preserving the apostolic doctrinal tradition became important. This tradition was described with the term paratheke (something left in safe-keeping, a pledge): “Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you” (1 Tim 6:20); “Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us” (2 Tim 1:14). This concept has been borrowed from the inheritance laws of the classical period. In the same way, the legacy of the apostle Paul is also considered immune to all manner of interference and change. This legacy must be preserved and looked after. This task falls to the servants of the church, whose prototypes are Paul’s disciples Timothy and Titus. In this way the free – and for this reason at times also dangerous – charismaticism was placed under the control of Christian doctrine and the structure of the Church.

FREEDOM AS GIFT AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE BIBLE

Prof. Antti Laato

The Judaism of Jesus' day created the framework within which Christian theology began to be shaped and seek direction. In this presentation I will begin methodically by first considering what sort of perspectives on the theme of freedom are evident in first century Judaism. From there we shall turn to the Old Testament and early Christian theology and clarify how Christians sought answers to the same issues surrounding the theme of freedom from the perspective of their belief that through Jesus Christ, God has announced to the world the salvation from the power of sin, death and Satan.

1 Freedom in Judaism at the time of Jesus

Created for freedom and responsibility: Proverbs chapter 8 describes the part played by the Wisdom of God in creation. Wisdom, or God's first-born (*reshit*), played on the earth in the spirit of freedom (Proverbs 8:22, 27–31):

> Yahweh possessed me, the Firstborn (reshit) of his way, before his works of old … When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker (ʾāmôn); and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

Even before the time of Jesus, Chapter 8 of Proverbs provided Jewish biblical interpretation with a link to the creation story in Genesis, which begins with the word *bereshit,* "in the beginning". According to the Old Testament apocryphal text, the Wisdom of Solomon, God discussed the creation of humanity with Wisdom: "Let us make humankind in our image…" (Gen 1:26). These words in Gen 1 could be interpreted as meaning "with the Beginning" or "with the First-born" God created heaven and earth. Wisdom's freedom has been transferred to humanity, who can enjoy freedom in God's creation, but because they are free

they are also responsible for creation and the way in which they live. Humanity's responsibility includes understanding that God created the world with His word, and thus the world will only remain standing by following God's word (Wisdom 9:1–6):

> O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy, who have made all things by your word, and by your wisdom have formed humankind to have dominion over the creatures you have made, and rule the world in holiness and righteousness, and pronounce judgment in uprightness of soul, give me the wisdom that sits by your throne, and do not reject me from among your servants. For I am your servant, the son of your servant-girl, a man who is weak and short-lived, with little understanding of judgment and laws; for even one who is perfect among human beings will be regarded as nothing without the wisdom that comes from you.

God's Wisdom protected the master of creation and raised him up at the very moment of the Fall (Wisdom 10:1–2): "Wisdom protected the first-formed father of the world, when he alone had been created; she delivered him from his transgression, and gave him strength to rule all things." Wisdom was also with Israel during its captivity in Egypt and brought it to freedom (Wisdom 10:15–17):

> A holy people and blameless race
>
> wisdom delivered from a nation of oppressors.
>
> She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord,
>
> and withstood dread kings with wonders and signs.
>
> She gave to holy people the reward of their labors;
>
> she guided them along a marvelous way.

Wisdom theology can be seen as the theology of freedom and responsibility. God has given humanity the freedom to operate in life but this comes with responsibility. Life in this world is bound to the word of God. For this reason wise actions respect the instructions of God's word. At the same time, wisdom theology presents the view of how humanity is subservient to the domain of sin and death. A weak person needs God's gift, he must be able to partake in God's Wisdom.

In Jewish interpretation, wisdom could be equated with the Torah (e.g., Sirach 24). The yoke of freedom in the Torah is the freedom granted by Wisdom.

Freedom and the seed of Abraham: Freedom was an ideal for the Jews. They saw themselves as the descendants of Abraham and were slaves to no one, entirely free from all external constraints. Being descendants of Abraham was understood as meaning that they were released from serving foreign gods and therefore became God's own children. Already during the Second Temple Judaism period, the stories of Genesis were complemented by describing in detail how Abraham gave up the worship of false gods in the Ur of the Chaldees. A good example is the Book of Jubilees, which could be characterized as a reworking of Genesis. Apparently this method of reworking a biblical text by adding necessary interpretational details was one way of writing a commentary. The Aramaic targumim are one example, which record interpretations of biblical texts presented in synagogues, and include interpretational addenda alongside the translation.

Jewish traditions of the Second Temple era later found their place in rabbinic literature. For example, in the pre-Rabbinic Apocalypse of Abraham 1-7, Abraham, in Ur of the Chaldees, wonders who has created the world. He feels that the local beliefs about the sun, moon and the stars are inadequate, because all these disappear from sight either in the evening or morning. Eventually Abraham concludes that there must be a higher, invisible, force that has created everything. Thus, according to this interpretation, Abraham becomes the first convert to recognize God's oneness. Proselytes or those converted to Judaism even today still acknowledge Abraham as their father: *Avraham Avinu*.

Even the Koran follows this Jewish tradition of interpretation, according to which Abraham renounces false gods and discovers the freedom to serve the one and only true god. Sura 6:75–79 reads as follows:

> And thus did We show Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure. So when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star; said he: "Is this my Lord?" So when it set, he said: "I do not love the setting ones." Then when he saw the moon rising, he said: "Is this my Lord?" So when it set, he said: "If my Lord had not guided me I should certainly be of the erring people." Then when he saw the sun rising, he said: "Is this my Lord? Is this the greatest?" So when it set, he said: "O my people! surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allah). Surely I have turned myself, being upright (*hanif*), wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists."

The Arabic concept *hanif* refers to a pre-Islamic monotheist who was neither Jewish nor Christian. Abraham had therefore, as a *hanif*, turned his gaze towards the true God. Islam holds the view that corruption came in the time after Abraham and true faith in the one and only God was lost. Thus the world sank back under the influence of primal forces into the slavery from which Muhammed set it free.

Freedom and God's great acts in history: The Jewish concept of freedom is largely based on God's act of mercy in rescuing his own people from slavery in Egypt. In the Old Testament the freeing of the Israelites is expressed using two juridical terms, *pādâ* ("to buy someone's freedom") and *gā'al* (a verb to do with ransoming, for example, someone sold into slavery could be ransomed or their freedom bought). The exegetical presentation I made at the Lappeenranta theological discussions in 1998 deals with the use of these concepts in the Old Testament and their impact on the message of the New Testament.

According to Jewish thinking, God entered into a covenant with Israel by showing it His mercy and by freeing it from enslavement in Egypt. This great event is commemorated annually in the Jewish Passover haggada. The Jewish celebration of Passover is an opportunity to teach the younger members of the family about the spiritual significance of deliverance from Egypt. Gathered together for the meal, the family recognizes that they would still be slaves in Egypt today, if God had not rescued their forebears. Before singing the Hallel Psalms (113–118) the family joins in praising God's great works:

> Thus it is our duty to thank, to laud, to praise, to glorify, to exalt, to adore, to bless, to elevate and to honor the One who did all these miracles for our fathers and for us. He took us from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to festivity, and from deep darkness to great light and from bondage to redemption. Let us therefore recite before Him: Hallelujah!

The Passover meal actualizes the deliverance from Egypt personally for each participant. Thus the whole family can rejoice together in the deliverance that was once visited upon their forbears but that they are also receiving:

> We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord, our God, took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. If the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

The yoke of freedom in the Torah: The Jewish people were proud that they had been chosen from among all the peoples of the earth to follow God's commandments. The Torah was a great privilege. Even in Jesus' day the mandates of the Torah were strictly followed, a good example of which is the Qumran scrolls found in the mid 20th century. The New Testament speaks of a different group, the Pharisees, who by their adherence to the tradition of the elders strove to ensure that no violations of the Torah took place. The Torah urges the Israelites to be holy, just as God is holy: "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). In the Mishna tractate Pirkei Avot 3:5 it is proudly stated that the yoke of the Torah sets the Jews free from all other yokes: "One who accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah is exempted from the yoke of [foreign] government duties and the yoke of worldly cares; but one who casts off the yoke of Torah is saddled with the yoke of [foreign] government duties and the yoke of worldly cares." "Worldly cares" in this case is understood apparently as worldly activity foreign to God's commandments, such as idol worship, living with lax morals, etc.

The Jewish free man: The character of Jewish religion defined the ideal as a Jewish free man. In the Jewish book of prayers every devout Jewish man remembers to thank God that God did not create him as a pagan, a slave or a woman. The purpose of this prayer was to emphasize the big importance of the Torah. Heathens did not receive the Torah from God. A slave on the other hand is subordinate to his master and is not free in all circumstances to follow the Torah. And, according to Jewish thinking, women were not required to follow all the statutes of the Torah. There is a certain inequality evident in Jewish religion, in the relationship of each person to the covenant with God. The ideal was to be Jewish, free and a man, and thus able to commit unreservedly to the liberating yoke of the Torah.

Freedom, responsibility and martyrdom: The Jewish theology of freedom also included responsibility for others. Deuteronomy in particular urges the teaching of the commandments and laws to future generations. Even before the time of Jesus, Judaism had developed numerous pedagogical structures whose purpose was to instill God's Torah and work in the minds of new generations. The Jewish people needed to know about God's great mercy towards them and divorce themselves in their own lives from the profanity of pagan life: worshipping false gods and living unchastely.

What is essential about this concept of responsibility is the need to set an example one's self. When one demonstrates to others how important it is to follow God's commandments and laws, then others will be encouraged to follow them. During

the Maccabean period, Judaism developed a strong belief that people should be prepared even to sacrifice their own lives for God's Torah. A martyr's death was an extreme expression of people's responsibility to testify to God's word. 2 Macc 6 clarifies how the aged Eleazar takes responsibility for other Jews. Eleazar is forced to eat pork sacrificed to false gods, which he refuses in accordance with the laws of the Torah. Eleazar was respected even amongst the persecutors, and the persecutors abashedly took him aside and offered him the opportunity to avoid execution (2 Macc 6:21– 22):

> Those who were in charge of that unlawful sacrifice took the man aside because of their long acquaintance with him, and privately urged him to bring meat of his own providing, proper for him to use, and to pretend that he was eating the flesh of the sacrificial meal that had been commanded by the king, so that by doing this he might be saved from death, and be treated kindly on account of his old friendship with them.

However, Eleazar demonstrates his responsibility as a teacher of the Torah to the rest of the Jewish people. Therefore he says to his persecutors (2 Macc 6:24–28):

> 'Such pretence is not worthy of our time of life,' he said, 'for many of the young might suppose that Eleazar in his ninetieth year had gone over to an alien religion, and through my pretence, for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they would be led astray because of me, while I defile and disgrace my old age. Even if for the present I would avoid the punishment of mortals, yet whether I live or die I will not escape the hands of the Almighty. Therefore, by bravely giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age and leave to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws.'

This story is a good example of the psychological spiritual state of the persecutor. When their hand is forced, they try to be merciful and crafty, but when the object of persecution refuses to play along, their ire is roused. Therefore, 2 Macc 6:29 reveals that the persecutors treated Eleazar with "ill will" after he had made his declaration.

The fates of Eleazar and the seven brothers described in 2 Macc 7 give a clear impression of Jewish martyr theology. Adhering to the Torah meant freedom in the Lord and freedom from all other yokes and compulsions.

Eschatological freedom: Leviticus 25 describes the central social procedures of a jubilee year (Hebrew *yôbēl*) or, rather, **"year of freedom"** (Hebrew *yābal*

means “to send away”, “return”). The most important of these is the *returning* of land property to its rightful owners and *freeing* “slaves”. Apparently the social aspects of a year of jubilee have never been practicable. This year of “release” later developed into an eschatological concept. Isaiah 61 is a good example of how the eschatological day of salvation is compared to the year of jubilee. This eschatological day of release appears in the so-called Melkisedek fragment from Qumran (11QMelk), according to which Melkisedek arrives to judge the world at the end of 10 jubilee cycles (10 x 49 = 490 years; cf. Dan 9:24 –27). As an eschatological theme, freedom was also linked with messianic hopes. These hopes led to the theme of freedom becoming a purely political concept, which could lead to national zealotry.

Freedom and national zealotry: The yearning for freedom at the core of Jewish religion occasionally led to political extremes. Certain culminations of this include the Jewish Revolt of AD 66–70, and the Bar Kochba Revolt of 132–135. Slogans such as “the Redemption of Jerusalem” and “the Freedom of Jerusalem” appear on coins struck during these wars. They clearly illustrate the yearning for political freedom. Jews were meant to be able to be free from all external compulsion, free to worship God alone.

The work of the Jewish historian Josephus on the Jewish wars contains a detailed account of an extreme manifestation of this yearning for political freedom: the mass suicide at Masada. The desperate Jews of Masada preferred to kill themselves than surrender to be enslaved by the enemy. At Masada we encounter another Jewish man, also named Eleazar, who urges his brothers to commit suicide to avoid becoming slaves to the Romans. Josephus attributes the following speech to Eleazar, addressing the desperate Jews defending Masada against the Roman siege (*Jewish Wars*, VII.8, trans. W. Whiston):

> But certainly our hands are still at liberty, and have a sword in them; let them then be subservient to us in our glorious design; let us die before we become slaves under our enemies, and let us go out of the world, together with our children and our wives, in a state of freedom. This it is that our laws command us to do; this it is that our wives and children crave at our hands; nay, God himself hath brought this necessity upon us; while the Romans desire the contrary, and are afraid lest any of us should die before we are taken. Let us therefore make haste, and instead of affording them so much pleasure, as they hope for in getting us under their power, let us leave them an example which shall at once cause their astonishment at our death, and their admiration of our hardiness therein.

2 Freedom in early Christian interpretation

We shall now consider the Jewish themes of freedom that were covered in Chapter 1 from a Christian perspective. What is essential in Christian theology is that all these different themes of freedom are united by Christology. This is especially clear in Paul's theology and the Gospel of John, which is one of the more developed theological presentations in the New Testament. We shall also examine other NT texts and early Christian literature.

2.1 The theme of freedom in Paul's theology

The Incarnate Wisdom brings freedom: The essential component of Paul's mission is the notion of being set free from the world of false gods and dark forces and becoming one of God's own. In Paul's earliest letter this is expressed as follows (1 Thess 1:9–10): "…you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming." The Son of God, who is now in heaven, is, according to Paul's theology, God's personal Wisdom, through whom the world was created. The earliest passage in the NT which talks of Jesus as God's Wisdom through whom the world was created is Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 8:6). Paul presents this early Christological confession of faith in the context of a discussion about eating the meat sacrificed to false gods (1 Cor 8:4–8):

> Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that 'no idol in the world really exists', and that 'there is no God but one.' Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth – as in fact there are many gods and many lords – yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 'Food will not bring us close to God.' We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.

The incarnate wisdom of God relieves humanity from all ties to false gods and primal forces. That is why Christians do not have to fear these false gods. This release from all primal forces is also expressed in Col 1:12–23 (the authenticity

of the letter is debated, but its theology is clearly Pauline), in which Jesus is similarly described as God's Wisdom present at the Creation:

> …giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
>
> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.
>
> And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him – provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

Christ as the seed of Abraham grants freedom: In Paul's theology, the promise made to Abraham contains three aspects. *Firstly*, Abraham entered a correct relationship with God through faith: "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness" (Rom 4:9; Gen 15:6). *Secondly*, Abraham's manner of entering into the covenant with God affects all people on earth: "for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'" (Rom 4:16–17; Gen 17:4). *Thirdly*, the covenant forged with Abraham does not lose its meaning after the Law of Moses comes into effect: "My point is this: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise" (Gal 3:17–18).

In Paul's theology, being a descendant of Abraham means entering into a covenant with God through justifying faith: "a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law" (Rom 3:28). In the letter to James, on the other hand, Abraham's faith is seen in the light of Jewish interpretation, in that faith and fidelity (works) are connected (cf., 1 Macc 2:50-52). Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac was proof of his fidelity: "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" (James 2:24).

In Pauline theology, Jesus Christ is the promised seed (offspring) of Abraham, through whom all nations will be blessed (Gal 3:16): "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring; it does not say, 'And to offsprings', as of many; but it says, 'And to your offspring', that is, to one person, who is Christ." Thus, everyone partakes of blessings through this offspring of Abraham: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you'"(Gal 3:8; Gen 12:3, 22:18). On the other hand, Christians are the seed of Abraham and so are his offspring: "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29).

Christians are seen as the offspring of Abraham elsewhere in the NT as well (Acts 3:25): "You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

Freedom and God's act of grace in Christ: If the flight from Egypt was seen by the Jewish people as a sign of God's grace through which they were freed to worship the one and living God, then the redemption promised through Christ was to Paul a similar event in salvation history. Paul compares Jesus' act of redemption to a new marriage, the forming of a new covenant (cf., Jer 31:31–34), in which Christians enter into the dominion of Christ's grace (Rom 7:1–4):

> Do you not know, brothers and sisters – for I am speaking to those who know the law – that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress. In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God.

According to Paul, being relieved of the yoke of Moses' Law and taking on the lighter yoke of the new covenant is the kind of freedom that some people are trying to take away from Christians: "But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us" (Gal 2:4). Paul's lesson about the freedom granted in the new covenant with Jesus resembles the Gospel of Matthew, in which Jesus compares the yoke of his own teaching with the heavy yoke of the Torah with all its traditions and rules (Matt 11:28–30):

> Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The impact of the salvation earned for us by Christ is evident in the Eucharist, which is the meal of the new covenant in which, like in the Passover meal, Jesus' act of redemption is actualized, along with the forgiveness of sins and release from the dominion of sin and death (1 Cor 11:23–26). Paul also interprets the release from slavery in Egypt typologically as representing Christian's release from all forces of darkness (1 Cor 10).

The law of freedom granted by Christ: If the yoke of the Torah was for the Jewish people the yoke of freedom, then Paul's Pharisean heritage and its view of the Torah are clearly reflected in his theology. To Paul, without Jesus, the Torah of Moses is an enslaving force. The many statutes of the Torah are like venom in the stinger of a scorpion, by which death holds people in its grip (1 Cor 15:56): "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law." A Christian, however, has been freed from the enslaving force of the law by Christ's death, as has been seen above, and now Christians may wander in God's freedom (Rom 7:5 - 6):

> While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

Paul speaks of the new law given by Christ, which has released Christians from the dominion of death into the freedom granted by Christ (Rom 8:2): "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." This liberation means that God's Holy Spirit inspires in the Christian the fruit of the Spirit, which is an antidote to all the actions of the flesh. Gal 5:13–26 tackles this battle between the Spirit and the flesh:

> For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

Paul means that Jesus Christ's own have crucified their old nature with all its lusts and desires. This language is Paul's baptismal terminology, as Rom 6 makes clear. Paul sets as opposites the acts of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. It is worth noticing that he speaks here about the fruit of the Spirit in singular. A Christian not only partakes of some special dimensions of a new Christian life, the Holy Spirit comprehensively brings about new fruit in him. The lesson in Gal 5 about the acts of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit is linked to early Christian baptismal teaching. According to the Church Fathers, baptismal teaching included education about the Christian way of life. The catechumen was isolated from the world during his education (which, according to the church order of Hippolytus, lasted for 3 years) in order to become trained in this new lifestyle. Relinquishing a life of sin through baptism is also clearly expressed in Paul's letter (1 Cor 6:9 –11):

> Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers – none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Paul is reminding the Christians of Corinth that they have received baptism and through it have given up all sinful life. In the water of baptism they have been "washed", "sanctified" and "justified". For this reason they are no longer allowed to wander in the sins of the old pagan world. Paul catalogs a list of sins that also appear in Chapters 1–6 of the Didache. This section precedes the lessons on baptism (Did 7) which require that all Christians have already assimilated the lessons of Did 1–6. Did 2 gives a good impression of the kind of sinful life that the first Christians were set free from through baptism:

> And this is the second commandment of the teaching: you shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not corrupt children, nor practice sexual deviation; you shall not steal; nor practice calling on spiritual guides; nor use sorcery; you shall not procure an abortion, nor practice infanticide; you shall not covet your neighbor's goods. You shall not commit perjury, nor accuse someone falsely; you shall not speak evil nor hold a grudge. You shall not be double minded nor double tongued, for the double tongue is the snare of death. Your word shall not be false or empty, but do what you say. You shall not be covetous or extortionate, or hypocritical, or malicious or proud. You shall not plan evil against your neighbor. You should not hate anyone; but you should reprove some, and you should pray for some, and you should love some more than your own life.

Christian baptismal teaching has long included teaching about God's new liberating Law of the Spirit. Christ sets people free from the darkness of the sinful world and brings them under the influence of God's Spirit: "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery… For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another" (Gal 5:1, 13).

All are free in Christ regardless of who they are: In Paul's theology, the difference with Jewish thinking in which the free Jewish man is the ideal representative of the covenant between God and Israel is clearly expressed. When Paul speaks of the three dichotomies (Gal 3:28) "Jewish – Greek (pagan)", "free – slave", "man – woman", one could imagine that, as a former Pharisee, he knows the Jewish prayer in which the Jewish man gives thanks to God for not making him a pagan, a slave or a woman: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." The NT teaches that Christian congregations may not make distinctions between people. Therefore, according to Col 3:9–11, Christians should strive to prevent differentiation from breaking up the congregation:

> …seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

Responsibility for the weak given by freedom, and martyrdom: Paul often deals with the problem of why Christians have a sensitive conscience with regard to God's statutes and why it is un-Christian to force the consciences of the weak to make decisions they are not prepared to make. This includes the various statutes about food included in Moses' laws. Paul writes (1 Cor 8:9–12):

> But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling-block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

When a Christian forces another Christian to act against the conviction of his conscience, he is committing a grave sin (cf. Rom 14:13–23). Paul formulates this in his uncompromising style: "you sin against Christ".

In Paul's theology, the freedom granted by Christ is so precious that one must be prepared to suffer for it, even die. 1 Thess 3:4 demonstrates that the imminent persecution against the name of Christ is a central part of Paul's mission: "In fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as you know." Living in the freedom of Christ means that even death cannot strip people of this connection of love. According to Rom 8:38–39, "I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." And in the words of Philippians 1:21, "to me, living is Christ and dying is gain."

Eschatological freedom in Christ: In Pauline theology, a Christian's freedom from sin and death is a result of God's crucial redemptive act at the end of time. However, it is not yet evident. This has traditionally been formulated as salvation being a reality that is "now but not yet". The freedom from sin and death received

in baptism represents the hope that Christians can, in the future, live in perfect resurrection life with Christ (Rom 6:4–5):

> Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we *will* (fut.) certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

At the end of Gal 4, we also see this "now but not yet" freedom in Christ. Paul compares Hagar's child of the flesh and Sarah's child of the promise, and sees a connection between earthly Jerusalem and heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:21–31):

> Tell me, you who desire to be subject to the law, will you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman. One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh; the other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, 'Rejoice, you childless one, you who bear no children, burst into song and shout, you who endure no birth pangs; for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than the children of the one who is married.' Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac. But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the scripture say? 'Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman.' So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman.

From nationalistic zeal to the freedom granted by Christ: The first (Jewish) Christians also experienced the nationalistic zeal and yearning for freedom inspired by the messianic hopes in Jesus. Scholars have come to see that the hymns of thanksgiving recorded in Luke are typical of the Jewish nationalistic messianic hopes. There will be a rupture in society, when the lowly will be elevated and the rich will be sent away empty (Song of Mary), or when God's own are freed from the power of their enemies so that they might serve God freely (Song of Zachariah). An important detail regarding the context of these songs in Luke is

the Jews who gather in the Jerusalem temple to admire the infant Jesus. Of them it is said that they were "looking forward to the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25), "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). These same slogans, "the redemption of Jerusalem" and "the freedom of Jerusalem", appear on coins struck during the First Jewish Revolt and the Bar Kochba Revolt. At the end of the Gospel of Luke, the travellers on the road to Emmaus are still filled with Jewish messianic hope for Jesus. They say that they hoped Jesus would be the one to "redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). Luke, however, explains in his gospel how Jesus gradually revealed to his disciples what was really going on. The real enslavers are not the earthly powers, but the forces of darkness that bind people. The Acts of the Apostles describes how the gospel spreads across the world and releases people from darkness and power of Satan into the light and God's kingdom. Paul clarifies Jesus' words and the mission he intended to be carried out among all pagan nations (Acts 26:17–18):

> I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

The notion that human authority which maintains external order is ordained by God (cf. Rom 13) took hold fairly quickly in Christian theology. Christians are urged to live in peace with all people as much as possible (1 Tim 2:1–4). Just before Rom 13, Paul gives his conditional recommendation: "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (Rom 12:18). Paul knows that it is not always possible to live in peace with everybody. For Christians, there will be moments where they must obey God more than man (Acts 4:19–20). The Book of Revelations is a reminder that darkness and hatred toward God exist in the world. This perspective on the world of darkness is more clearly presented in the Gospel of John.

2.2 The theme of freedom in the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John begins with a description of how divine Wisdom, already by the time of Jesus conflated in Jewish theology with the Greek philosophical concept of Logos, was made flesh (John 1:1-5):

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has

> come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Wisdom, which in the spirit of freedom had played at Creation, and been responsible for the creation of humanity and given it the freedom and responsibility to act in creation, is born as humanity's brother. What is essential about the Incarnation is that God's Wisdom is able to set free those living enslaved by sin.

Later in the Gospel of John, Jesus gets into a discussion with some Jews about being descendants of Abraham and what this means (John 8:31–36):

> Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, "You will be made free"?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there for ever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father.

Jesus has encountered a common subject of boastfulness among Jews. Being a descendant of Abraham means freedom. Jesus opens his listeners' eyes to the reality of sin. One who sins is a slave to sin and therefore needs to be set free. Freedom is not, according to Jesus, offered by the yoke of the Torah, but by Jesus' own words and teachings. According to the Gospel of John, the Torah's meaning lies in that its texts bear witness to Jesus. Thus the yoke of the Torah, which releases from all other obligations, should release Jews into the freedom of the incarnate Wisdom of God (John 5:45–47):

> Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?

According to the Gospel of John, the great moment in salvation history comes at Jesus' death, when sin is removed. As a consequence, salvation from slavery to sin is offered to all people. This salvation-historical event means a new covenant

in the form of the Eucharist, in which the salvation brought by Jesus is recalled. Jesus' speech about the bread of life, which like manna comes from heaven, represents the new period of exodus brought by Jesus and the Passover meal set by Jesus for his followers (John 6:53–58):

> Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus also breaks traditional Jewish boundaries. A good example is John 4, where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman, or John 8:1–11 (the text is not included in all manuscripts and whether it is part of the original Gospel of John is a subject of debate), where Jesus refrains from judging a woman accused of adultery. It is important to note that the Jewish scribes who test Jesus present the woman by saying that she was caught in the act (cf., Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22). Apparently Jesus understands this to mean that the man must also be known, but only the woman is brought to be judged.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus gives an example of how people must be guided in the right direction by the word of God even when this action causes anger and persecution. It is a repeated occurrence in the Gospel of John, that whoever is with Jesus, experiences the wrath of the rest of the world. John 15:18–25:

> If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world – therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'Servants are not greater than their master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and

> hated both me and my Father. It was to fulfil the word that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.'

Occasionally, Jesus is suspected of zealotry. He is suspected of giving his life and killing himself (apparently through fanatical religious activity). John 8:21–30 is preceded by a discussion about the seed of Abraham. It is revealed that those conversing with Jesus are confused about whether he is actively seeking his own martyrdom. On the other hand, it is this visible example of absolute adherence to the word of God that convinces many Jews:

> Again he said to them, 'I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.' Then the Jews said, 'Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, "Where I am going, you cannot come"?' He said to them, 'You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.' They said to him, 'Who are you?' Jesus said to them, 'Why do I speak to you at all? I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.' They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.' As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

3 Summary

The key lessons of this presentation can be condensed into the following points:

1. Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of God, who has been incarnated as our brother in order to set us free from sin, death and the devil. Our Lord and Redeemer are one and the same. The freedom and responsibility granted to us in Creation have been distorted through the corruption of sin. In the redemption attained by God's Wisdom freedom is granted, and as a result God's Spirit brings about Christian responsibility, which is used to benefit one's neighbors and to fulfil God's will in the world.

2. The promise made to Abraham affects both freedom and responsibility. Through Abraham's seed, nations have become blessed. For Israel this meant, e.g., release from slavery in Egypt and beginning a new life accountable to God in the land of Canaan. The New Testament testifies that Jesus is the seed of Abraham, who has committed a decisive act of salvation on behalf of all men so that everyone can be a child of Abraham, i.e., partake of the blessings promised to Abraham by God. Once set free, Christians live responsibly, wishing to fulfill God's will in their lives.

3. Christ grants law of freedom to those whom he has set free from sin, death and the devil. The law of freedom guides Christians into a responsible, Christian, life for the glory of God and the benefit of their neighbors.

4. The gift of freedom in Christ affects all people regardless of who they are. There is a special responsibility to care for the weak and less fortunate so that no one is left out of the gift of freedom granted by Christ. A Christian's responsibility also means always bearing the cross. Bearing the cross should not be confused with religious zealotry, where Christ's gift of freedom is turned into a political concept.

5. Christian responsibility includes teaching. Passing on the gospel of freedom and the law to new generations is a Christian obligation.

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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At the start of the 21st century, human rights work has once again become important for the Russian Orthodox Church. However, it has always done this type of work: during the Soviet era many brave priests and laypeople opposed the regime and defended the right to religion and to profess faith and for religion to have a place in society. Brave people such as the late dean Dimitri Dudko, Vladimir Osipov and Alexander Ogorodnikov were fearless in spreading the word of God and managed to cause a gradual weakening of the official state atheism. They are well known both in Russia and abroad. Less known, however, is how the bishops of the Russian Church constantly worked to defend the needs of the Church. Although this work was done quietly through intense negotiations with the Soviet regime, it was still the most effective way to oppose an atheist power.

Early on, the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and the chosen head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Holy Patriarch Tichon, rose up to defend the church and believers from persecution. Almost every day the Holy Patriarchs Sergei, Alexei I and Pimen as well as the Metropolitans Nicolai (Jarushevits), Nicodim (Rotov) and Juvenal (Pojarkov) as well as numerous other bishops had to engage in difficult diplomatic negotiations requiring much wisdom with those in power in order to oppose, at least to some degree, the persecutors and to defend the churches, their workers, priests and active laypeople. Today we know much more about the role that Alexei II, the Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, had in this difficult job. When he was the head of the Moscow Patriarchate, by that time Metropolitan Alexei, saved many churches and monasteries from closure and helped the bishops of the diocese with their relationship with the Soviet regime. Soon after perestroika began he appealed to the President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, and suggested the dismantling of restrictions against Church activities. Already as Patriarch, this current head of our Church did much work to bring about the early recovery of the Church, first to survive the official atheist system that did not want to give the Church any operational powers and later to overcome its influence and resurgence among the officials and intellectuals.

In the 1990s the Church's work to defend justice went in new directions. These were primarily to do with the state of Orthodox people in former Soviet Republics who were persecuted for practicing religion or because of their nationality. The Church took care of human rights in ethnic and political conflicts that erupted in former Soviet areas. The presence of Orthodox priests and laypeople in the army as well as in the social welfare departments and prison administrations also helped make these institutions more humane and helped defend the rights and human dignity of the people in them. At the very end of the 1990s the first human rights organizations and groups were created in the Orthodox circles.

At this time in Russia, a fairly heated discussion began between socially active Orthodox believers and the most well-known human rights campaigners. These human rights campaigners had changed their stance towards the Church from a very positive attitude in the Soviet era to a strongly negative one. I will give some examples of this. The human rights campaigner Lev Levinson in his article, "Holy Russia has no Sex," writes that Orthodox priests and believers who condemn loose sexual morals are "obscurantist", "Christ's gendarmes", "professional witch hunters", "grand inquisitors", etc. As their opposites Levinson considers "the values of consciously loose sexual morals" that "cannot be separated from political, economic and ideological freedom."

The mass media has fierce polemics about the role of religion in the army and school, its relationship with the state, Christianity's effect on economic ethics, the use of religious symbols in modern works of art and the possibility of expressing the Church's values in politics. Several famous human rights campaigners, who were dissidents during the Soviet era, took part in the round table discussions dealing with the disputes on the exhibition "Beware, religion" (the objects on show were felt to be blasphemous from an Orthodox point of view and were destroyed by the congregation of a Moscow church). The head of the Institute of Human Rights said there: "Traditional Russian Orthodoxy is generally an un-Christian sect. I don't know how I should speak, or what I should speak about with a masked person who in the armed forces calls himself a priest and says that he has come to support our troops." Another former dissident, Gleb Yakunin, who lost his right to priesthood when he refused to submit to the Synod's order that priests may not stand for election in the parliamentary elections, said the following: "The core of the problem is the same Moscow Patriarchate. It is a great monster. Russian Orthodoxy is ritual belief, paganism."

Similar statements have sadly become commonplace for the rights campaigners who believe that it is their job to bring radical pacifism and secular humanism to Russia, the idea that the government should refuse to depend on religion and

should instead mechanically follow Western political culture. It is no wonder, then, that these campaigners mainly make a living by receiving Western grants. Polemic with parties that preach the above mentioned things and blame the Orthodox Church for neglecting questions of human rights has made many representatives of our Church think deeply about the thematic of human rights in today's world.

Already in 2000, the Bishops' Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church approved the basic document on socially important questions called "The Basis of Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church." The core of our Church's understanding of human rights is presented there. The section "Christian Ethics and Secular Law," says: "As secularism developed, the lofty principles of inalienable human rights turned into a notion of the rights of the individual outside his relations with God. In this process, the freedom of the personality transformed into the protection of self-will (as long as it is not detrimental to individuals) and into the demand that the state should guarantee a certain material living standard for the individual and family. In the contemporary systematic understanding of civil human rights, man is treated not as the image of God, but as a self-sufficient and self-sufficing subject. Outside God, however, there is only the fallen man, who is rather far from being the ideal of perfection aspired to by Christians and revealed in Christ (*Ecce homo*!). For the Christian sense of justice, the idea of human freedom and rights is bound up with the idea of service. The Christian needs rights so that in exercising them he may first of all fulfill in the best possible way his lofty calling to be 'the likeness of God', as well as his duty before God and the Church, before other people, family, state, nation and other human communities.

On the 1st of July, 2004, the Orthodox group "Radonež" arranged a round table discussion on the topic "Individual Freedom and Human Dignity – The Orthodox and Liberal Point of View." Probably for the first time, this discussion presented heated views on how Orthodoxy corresponds with modern human rights and how it is necessary to create its own "view of human rights." Soon after this meeting two expert meetings on human rights issues were held at the External Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate.

"The Declaration of Human Rights and Dignity," which was ratified in April 2006 by the World Russian People's Congress (VRNS) became very important in the religious-social discussion. This document views man's basic value as God's image. According to the Declaration this value should be "appreciated by all of us as well as by society and the state." According to the Declaration this value is not something inherent from birth, but it is achieved through good deeds.

Two freedoms are differentiated in the Declaration: inner freedom from evil and the freedom of moral choice. It says: "Freedom from evil is a value in itself. The freedom of choice and the individual get their value from choosing good. Said another way, freedom of choice leads to self-harm and damages human dignity when man chooses evil."

The central idea of the document is that a harmonic unity between human rights, moral values, duties and individual responsibility must be achieved. "Human rights are based on the individual's value and they should aim at realizing this value. It is for this reason that the content of human rights must be joined to morality. Removing these rights from morality means desecrating them, because there is no such thing as an immoral value. We stand for the rights of life and against the rights of death, for the right of creation and against the right of destruction. We acknowledge the rights and freedom of man to the extent that they help the individual to do good, protect him from inner and outer evil, allow him to realize himself positively in society... Rights and freedoms are inseparable from man's duties and responsibilities. In carrying out his interests the individual must take into account the interests of his loved ones, family, the local community, the people and the whole of mankind."

> One of the questions that divide civilizations today is what are determined to be values and what is their hierarchical order in the system of values. The cliché is that many of the values are the same. Many, yes, but certainly not all. Of the Ten Commandments only believers – and not necessarily even all of them – will adhere to the first four. The other commandments are also constantly being debated even in "Christian" circles. And even if the values were the same, the whole of today's debate on human rights is centered on the question of which values are higher and which are lower in the hierarchy of values. (An example of this is, e.g., the disputes, which erupted in violence, of which is more important – sacred objects or the freedom of expression of journalists and artists.) Of this, the VRSN Declaration says: "There are values that are not beneath human rights. This type of values are: belief, morals, sacred objects and the Fatherland. When these values and human rights are in conflict, the laws of society and the state should harmoniously reconcile them. We must not accept situations where the realization of human rights would tread over religion or moral traditions that would offend religious or national sentiments or violate sacred objects or threaten the existence of the Fatherland." Also dangerous would be "'acquiring' such 'rights' that would legalize such behavior that is condemned by traditional moral stances and all the old religions."

The document mentioned strives to acknowledge different value systems and to harmonize relations between their adherents. It ends in the words: "We strive for dialogue with persons of different religions and different views on human rights and their hierarchy of values. Today this type of dialogue is the only way to avoid a conflict of civilizations and achieve the peaceful coexistence of different world views, cultures and legal and political systems. The future of humanity depends on how well we succeed in this task."

Soon after the VRNS the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church gave the team who worked on the aforementioned declaration the mission to prepare a church document on values and human freedom and rights. Work continued on it for two years. The team was supplemented by church and secular specialists and ultimately had representatives from many different fields: theologians, philosophers, linguists and also famous churchmen and influential Orthodox members of society. The team was led by the head of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad. As work progressed, the team discussed the most important questions of the document with famous Russian philosophers and legal experts. Many of the document's interpretations were also discussed with representatives of the Roman-Catholic Church and the Conference of European Churches. Before presenting the draft of the document to the Holy Synod and then to the Bishops' Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church the team negotiated on its contents with several Orthodox and secular organizations, rights campaigners, scientists and journalists. After each of these discussions, significant changes were made to the draft of the document. On June 25, 2007, the Bishops' Conference unanimously accepted *The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights* in order to develop the basics of the social understanding of our Church.

This document is by its nature primarily church-intern and theological-philosophical. It states that "The canonical structures, clergy and laity of our Church are to be guided by this document in their socially significant statements and actions. It is to be studied in the theological schools of the Moscow Patriarchate." Additionally, the document "The document is offered to the fraternal attention of Local Orthodox Churches in the hope that it will help our Churches to grow in unity and coordinate our practical actions. Other Christian Churches and associations as well as religious communities, governmental bodies and public circles in various countries and international organizations are also invited to study and discuss it." (postscript). Thus, discussing the document with the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland is the first time that its contents have

been discussed with representatives of another faith. In this context I would like to draw your attention to several interpretations contained in the document.

According to the document, human dignity comes from man being created in God's image. Additionally the document states that "It is the only ground which makes it possible to assert that human nature has an inherent dignity." (I.1). Similar views are fairly common in Western theological thought. However, in the Eastern tradition "dignity" does not only mean a once-given, permanent value, but also the person's moral state which can move in a better or worse direction. In this respect it is interesting that the word *nedostoinstvo,* "worthlessness," is much more common in the Orthodox liturgy and in theological texts than the word *dostoinstvo*, "value, worthiness." Also, the former is associated with man and the latter with God's gift which makes us something that we are not alone worthy of. The document of the Bishops' Conference quotes the prayer of Basil of Caesarea which the Orthodox say before the sharing of Holy Eucharist:

"Wherefore I, although unworthy both of heaven and of earth and of this temporary life, even I, a wretched sinner who had given myself over to every evil desire, despair not of salvation, though I have been wholly subject to sin, a slave to passion, and have defiled thine image within me, who am thy creation and thy work; but trusting in thine infinite compassion, draw nigh unto thee."

"Therefore, the human being as bearing the image of God," the document says, "should not exult in this lofty dignity, for it is not his own achievement but a gift of God. Nor should he use it to justify his weaknesses or vices, but rather understand his responsibility for the direction and way of his life. Clearly, the idea of responsibility is integral to the very notion of dignity. Therefore, in the Eastern Christian tradition the notion of 'dignity' has first of all a moral meaning, while the ideas of what is dignified and what is not are bound up with the moral or amoral actions of a person and with the inner state of his soul. Considering the state of human nature darkened by sin, it is important that things dignified and undignified should be clearly distinguished in the life of a person." (I.2)

Further on, the document states: "A morally undignified life does not ruin the God-given dignity ontologically but darkens it so much as to make it hardly discernable. This is why it takes so much effort of will to discern and even admit the natural dignity of a villain or a tyrant." (I.4).

The second, anthropological, part of the document deals with freedom. Freedom is considered one of the manifestations of God's image in human nature. Subjugating man's will to some outside authority through manipulation or

violence is considered "a violation of the order established by God" (II.1). The document also says, "at the same time, freedom of choice is not an absolute or ultimate value. God has put it at the service of human well-being. Exercising it, a person should not harm either himself or those around him. But due to the power of sin inherent in the fallen human nature, no human effort is sufficient to achieve genuine goodness" (II.1).

Like the VRNS Declaration mentioned above, this document speaks of two kinds of freedom – freedom of choice ***(αὐτεξουσίον)*** and freedom from sin, freedom to live in goodness ***(ἐλευθερία).*** In this context the VRNS asserts that "the fabric of society must take into account both freedoms and harmonize their realization in the public sector" (II.2). One cannot defend one freedom and neglect the other. The status of freedom in good and truth is not possible without the freedom of choice. Similarly, free choice loses its value and meaning if it is used for evil.

The document also states that if freedom of choice is used for evil, it disappears because evil enslaves man. "Our Lord Jesus Christ says: 'Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free … everyone who sins is a slave to sin.' (John 8:32, 34). This means that only those are truly free who take the path of righteous life and seek communion with God, the source of absolute truth. But the abuse of freedom and the choice of a false, immoral, way of life will ultimately destroy the very freedom of choice as it leads the will to slavery by sin. It is God alone as the source of freedom Who can maintain it in a human being. Those who do not wish to part with sin give away their freedom to the devil, the enemy of God and the father of evil and captivity. While recognizing the value of freedom of choice, the Church affirms that this freedom will inevitably disappear if the choice is made in favor of evil. Evil and freedom are incompatible." (II.2)

In this way the document recognizes that not only freedom from sin but also freedom of choice has value. However, the Russian Orthodox Church stresses that freedom of choice can be used to do evil which leads, for example, to all kinds of losses of freedom. Freedom of choice gives a special value to voluntary and independent choices that are targeted to good, but do not justify choosing evil. The value of freedom of choice is not unconditional in the eyes of an Orthodox Christian. This freedom does not lead to good results all situations and that is why it is not a value in itself but a neutral phenomenon.

The document declares quite decisively that religious norms are primary for Christians compared to any other rules set by man. Furthermore, religious norms must also be taken into account when building the social order. The document states: "In Orthodoxy, there is an immutable conviction that in ordering its life a

society should take into account not only human interests and wishes but also the divine truth, the eternal moral law given by the Lord and working in the world no matter whether the will of particular people or people's communities agree with it or not. For an Orthodox Christian, this law sealed in Holy Scriptures stands above any other rules, for it is by this law that God will judge the individual and nations standing before His throne." (III.2) This being the case, law and social order must be based on God's rules in addition to man's opinions and interests. That is why, according to the document, "human rights cannot be superior to the values of the spiritual world. A Christian puts his faith in God and his communion with Him above his earthly life. It is inadmissible and dangerous therefore to interpret human rights as the ultimate and universal foundation of societal life to which religious views and practice should be subjected." (III.2) Moral principles, which include love of one's neighbors and the fatherland, also have to be taken into consideration when defining the norms and regulations according to which society works. According to the document the modification and deployment of the concept of human rights has to be adapted with moral norms and the spiritual essence placed in man by God which is identifiable in the voice of conscience (III.3). "Human rights should not contradict love for one's homeland and neighbors." (III.4)

The document discusses several concrete rights and freedoms in detail. When defending the right to life it discusses abortion, suicide and euthanasia as well as terrorism, acts of war, homicide and all other criminal ways of taking human life. It says: "At the same time, life is not restricted to temporal limits in which the secular worldview and its legal system place the individual. Christianity testifies that temporal life, precious in itself, acquires fullness and absolute meaning in the perspective of eternal life. Priority therefore should be given not to the efforts to preserve temporal life by all means but to the desire to order it in such a way as to enable people to work together with God for preparing their souls for eternity." (IV.2).

According to the document "the principle of freedom of conscience is in harmony with God's will if it protects the individual against any arbitrary treatment of his inner world, against any forcible imposition of particular convictions upon him.. <...> In a secular state, the freedom of conscience, proclaimed and confirmed by law, enables the Church to preserve her identity and independence from people of other convictions and gives her a legal ground both for the immunity of her internal life and public witness to the Truth." (IV.3) The document also cites *The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* according to which "the adoption of the freedom of conscience as legal principle points to the fact that society has lost religious goals and values" (*BSC* III, 6). This is a

lament about people having become distanced from religious norms and having gone towards social norms. *The Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights* develops this thought and is against the total eradication of religion from social and governmental life: "The freedom of conscience is sometimes treated as requiring religious neutrality or (?) indifference of a state and society. Some ideological interpretations of religious freedom insist on the need to recognize all the faiths as relative or 'equally true'. This is inacceptable for the Church which, while respecting the freedom of choice, is called to bear witness to the Truth she cherishes and to expose its misinterpretations (cf. Tim. 3:15). A society has the right to determine freely the content and amount of cooperation the state should maintain with various religious communities depending on their strength, traditional presence in a particular country or region, contribution to the history and culture of the country and on their civil attitude. At the same time, there must be equality of citizens before law regardless of their attitude to religion. The principle of freedom of conscience does not present an obstacle for partnership relations between the Church and the state in social, educational or any other socially significant activities." (IV.3)

When dealing with artistic freedom, the document demands legal protection for sacred objects, the desecration of which "cannot be justified by references to the rights of an artist, writer or journalist. Modern law normally protects not only people's life and property but also symbolical values, such as the memory of the dead, burial places, historical and cultural monuments and national symbols. This protection should be applied to the faith and things held sacred by religious people." (IV.5)

Regarding different types of human rights, the document states: "unity and inter-connection between civil and political, economic and social, individual and collective human rights can promote a harmonious order of societal life both on the national and international level. The social value and effectiveness of the entire human rights system depend on the extent to which it helps to create conditions for personal growth in the God-given dignity and relates to the responsibility of a person for his actions before God and his neighbors." (IV.9) The document suggests that Orthodox Christians "take diligent care of the human rights and dignity – not only in word but also in deed." It acknowledges that in today's world "human rights are often violated in the modern world and human dignity is trampled down not only by the state authorities but also transnational structures, economic actors, pseudo-religious groups, terrorist and other criminal communities. More and more often, human rights and dignity have to be defended against the destructive aggression of the media." (V.2). When listing the areas of the human rights struggle in which the Orthodox should be especially active,

the document states: “Without seeking a revolutionary reconstruction of the world and acknowledging the rights of other social groups to participate in social transformations on the basis of their own worldview, the Orthodox Christians reserve the right to participate in building public life in a way that does not contradict their faith and moral principles. The Russian Orthodox Church is ready to defend the same principles in dialogue with the world community and in cooperation with people of other traditional confessions and religions.” (V.4)

The ratification of *The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights* caused a significant reaction in society. The majority of politicians, scientists, journalists and other Christians and representatives of non-Christian religions responded positively to the document. There were attempts to criticize the Church for defending only Orthodox Christian rights (though this critique does not at all correspond to the contents of the text), and there were also attempts to completely deny the Church the right to give its opinion on the social questions. Regarding this, a commentator on the website Rusland.ru aptly wrote: “The complaints at least seem to be without basis: the efforts of the country's leading Church to give its opinion on current issues is not an attempt to limit the freedom of conscience and speech, but is rather an example of their realization in practice. This is not a question of an attempt to force society to accept a single view on the matter (although the critics of the Russian Orthodox Church are prone to think so of any discussion where the participants do not hold their own view as the firm truth).”

A more serious criticism reflects the fundamental difference between Orthodox views on man and society and “post-Enlightenment” humanism. The latter reflects Greek thought and views man as “fundamentally good” and assumes that all social problems are caused by structures and foundations (which seemingly are not created by these “fundamentally good” people) that crush people. The head of the Za prava tšeloveka -organization (For Human Rights), Lev Ponomarev, writes: “The task of the human rights defenders is to defend man, the individual, and not to ponder whether or not he is sinful.” It stands to reason to ask if it is worth separating human rights work from the profound understanding of human life and society. If this is done, one can easily defend the obviously destructive and criminal phenomenon that the Church calls sin.

The discussion on questions of human rights with the exponents of the secular humanist viewpoint continues and is given a new, solid foundation by the document approved by the Bishops' Conference. The course of the present discussion has already raised many issues of key significance, which I shall briefly discuss before concluding.

In Orthodox thought the idea of man's value as the image of God has always been present. "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27). For the Christian, these Scriptural words are the unshakable foundation of the ontological value of the human individual. This value cannot be altered by difficult living conditions, humiliations of any kind or even the sinfulness of man, which stains the image of the Creator. It is no coincidence that many Orthodox saints would show respect to anyone who came to them, even the most sinful and degenerate of men, and bowed to him as the image of God. The value of the individual, given by God, is for the Christian the basis of his social esteem and grounds for creating social conditions that would enable the realization of the freedom given by the Creator.

As an aside, the ontological value of man does not change the realistic perception according to which the earthly world is susceptible to sin and the individual, suffering from sin, is in need of salvation. Orthodoxy does not share the "post-Enlightenment" opinion according to which man is a creature that, when free, always aspires to good and the human community, when free, aspires to progress. Orthodox Christians are not social optimists. They take very seriously the prophecies of the Apocalypse, how mankind, alienating itself from God and left to its own devices, brings about increasing evil, which ultimately reaches a final limit, followed by Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ.

Man and society cannot achieve the moral ideal by themselves. For that they require the blessing of God, which they receive in the true Church. The individual and the human community cannot be moral without education and instruction, the supporting of good and the restricting of evil. This applies, among others, to evil of the kind that is reckoned as sin by the church but considered "normal phenomena" in the modern justice system. It is no coincidence that there often arises debate between Orthodox Christians and those attempting in the name fashionable political correctness to revoke the right of Orthodox Christians to denounce as sinful and evil such phenomena as homosexuality, abortions, extramarital sexual affairs, blasphemy, atheism, the desecration of sacred objects etc. A true Christian, unlike a secular anthropocentrist, does not reckon as sin only crimes against another person or thr community. For us it is also sin to transgress against the commandments of God, which are as unchanging as God himself.

Even were these commandments in no way reflected in secular law or the customs of the society, it is considered necessary by Orthodox Christians that they be followed by both the individual and the human community. It is true that many sins are of a kind that would be strange to restrict by means of legislation and the state. However, they can and must be opposed inside the family, the congregation

and civic organizations. It is the mission of the Church to publicly reveal the acts of sin, exhorting people towards repentance and redemption.

Human rights are inseparably connected to responsibilities and civic duty, without which the self-realization of the individual threatens to turn into an egoistic consumerist attitude towards one's neighbor, the labors of past generations and the needs of future generations. It is no coincidence that the relationship between rights and duties is so clearly highlighted in the Russian political tradition.

The majority of the human rights known to modern legislation, including economical, social and cultural rights, are perfectly consistent with what the Orthodox consider to be the qualities necessary for a human life free from distress. Many might think that by accepting the same rules, the Orthodox and representatives of other worldviews can unite under collective "common human values". However, special attention must be paid to the value hierarchy, in which, unlike secular humanists, Orthodox Christians by no means give priority to man's earthly life or anything related to it.

For the majority of Orthodox Christians, the values of faith, sacred objects and the fatherland are more important than human rights, even the right to live. It is precisely for this reason that, during times of war, both bishops and hermit monks called upon the people to take up arms against the foreigners and the infidel conquerors. Similarly, during persecutions of the faith the Church readily surrendered to the persecutors any of its treasures that had no liturgical function, but called upon people to fight to the death if anyone attempted to remove sacred objects that should remain untouched by common hands.

Therefore, there are more important things in the Christian tradition than the earthly life – firstly one's own, followed by that of another (especially if an aggressor is concerned). Firstly, the faith – it is better to die than lose it. Secondly, sacred objects – under no circumstances must a Christian allow them to be debased. Additionally, the life and wellbeing of one's neighbor – the wellbeing of one's own family, congregation, people and that of any poor and suffering human being. The anthropocentric politico-judicial system, which only protects the earthly interests of man and society, can hardly ever achieve full acceptance by a true Christian, precisely because the values of faith and fatherland, for which a Christian is ready to die, occupy a much less important position in that system than man's survival in this world, his comfort, wealth, health and success. It is no wonder that when we engage in polemic debate with secular civil rights defenders, our value hierarchies are different: when we say that protecting sacred objects from desecration is more important than artistic freedom and freedom

of speech, we are disagreed with. We are told that the integrity of Russia can be compromised for the sake of the lives of the soldiers and fighters in Chechnya – but we disagree on this.

One would like to hope that the modern world will at least learn to respect and harmonize differing value hierarchies instead of attempting to create a monopoly of anthropocentrism in legislation and social structure. Only by defeating the allure of such a monopoly, only by refusing "liberal totalitarianism" can we avoid a clash of civilizations.

A special field in which many Orthodox civic organizations are already active is resistance to total control of the human individual. These organizations oppose the turning of the human individual into a piece of merchandise, the faceless module of a techno-consumerist society. Nowadays many in the Orthodox world have paid attention to the impending danger of the formation of an "electronic concentration camp", in which a person's private life and his religious and ideological choices can be subjected to strong influence by national governments, international power organs as well as, first and foremost, the unelected power players of the age of globalization, namely the governing boards of large companies, international bureaucracy and the mediacracy.

Modern information technology equipment that enables the total surveillance of all human functions is easily harnessed to the service of an ideological dictate – even in the case that this takes place in the name of democracy, political correctness, preservation of social stability and the fight against terrorism and other forms of criminal activity. For this reason it is imperative that the right of the human being to control the collection and use of information related to himself be protected and the transparency and accountability to the society of all kinds of systems of electronic control – both state-sponsored and private – be furthered.

I would like to express the wish that the thought and activity of Orthodox Christians in the field of human rights might develop actively. No doubt this will also give a solid foundation to the dialogue being conducted in the field in question with other religious communities and advocates of secular humanism. May such dialogue further mutual respect and may it help prevent any attempts to form an ideological dictate as well as developing a full-fledged cooperation for the benefit of all people and nations.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY

Professor Jaana Hallamaa

1 Human Rights – Lots of unclear talk

In less than 0.2 of a second, the search engine Google provides over 91 million hits for the term "human rights". By following these links, one can read all about what different electronic encyclopedias have to say about human rights. The Google search also provides access to human rights documents ranging from famous historic human rights charters to the manifestos of small special interest groups.[17] The search results allow one to familiarize one's self with organizations that strive to promote the implementation of human rights, but there are also websites maintained by various groups pursuing issues that they consider to be important. The search results also include web sites introducing organizations , which coordinate activities of different professional groups, such as the medical profession, in order to put human rights into practice.[18]

A web search not only yields masses of websites, but also a bewildering mix of different, mutually incompatible ideas about what constitutes human rights. Based on the search results, it seems that human rights universally affect all people, but at the same time it appears that human rights specifically protect different minority groups. In discussions about human rights it is often emphasized that they are part of a western way of thinking, but even groups that strongly criticize western views seem to consider it important to formulate their concept of human rights.

Human rights declarations and associated treatises catalogue a large number of human rights, but the material available on the Internet demonstrates that almost any issue that somebody considers to be important can be called a human right. In political rhetoric, presenting something as a human right serves as an argument in its favor. The wealth of information available on the Web on the one hand indicates

17 See e.g., http://www.un.org/rights/, http://www.hrw.org/, http://www.hrweb.org/, http://www.islam101.com/rights/index.htm, http://www.hrea.org/index.php?base_id=157, http://www.madre.org/articles/int/b10/sexualrights.html, http://www.hrea.org/index.php?base_id=161.

18 See http://www.doctorsforhumanrights.org/, http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/join/1-lawyers-for-liberty/index.shtml.

that human rights are considered valuable and making appeals to them seems to carry weight in an argument. On the other hand, it is apparent that persistently appealing to human rights will devalue the concept. If the discussion about human rights is inherently contradictory and any issue can be regarded as a human right, then it is difficult to say what human rights are and why they should be accorded respect. In order to be able to discuss human rights and appeal to them, they must be restricted: any given thing that people want or consider important cannot be considered a human right.[19]

2 Underlying assumptions

I have been assigned the task of a presentation on the subject of "Human Rights in the Light of Christianity". Examining human rights in the light of Christianity requires that human rights and Christianity be defined in relation to one another. However, it is not clear what this relationship is. One option is to think of human rights philosophy as being born from the **influence of Christianity** or that human rights discourse has absorbed Christian influences. Some people deny this connection and say that human rights philosophy is alien to Christianity and represents a different concept of humanity. The relationship can also be defined by avoiding any possible historical links between Christianity and human rights philosophy and pointing out the features that are shared by both Christianity and human rights philosophy. It is still possible to use the concepts and views offered by Christianity to justify (and/or criticize) human rights philosophy.

The title I have been supplied with indicates that those who formulated it think that human rights and Christianity can be examined separately and that Christianity can offer some perspective on human rights which will help define their relationship, as well as defining what the attitude towards human rights should be from a Christian perspective. This angle can be misleading, however, and distort the concept of human rights and our understanding of how they were shaped historically and the kind of perspective Christianity can provide. I think that the title is not entirely appropriate, but if we really want to study human rights in the light of Christianity it should be expressed differently. But before we can express it in a different way, many other things must be considered.

19 See Kilcullen 2008, who criticizes this development and considers that it is based on a conceptual misunderstanding.

I shall proceed as follows: initially I will establish what the concept of human rights means and in what way it is tied to the concept of the human being. I will do this by analyzing the concept of human rights by using fiction on the one hand, and philosophical and historical research on the other. I will then draw up a brief overview of the historical development of human rights. Then I will examine human rights from the perspective of Lutheran theology and social ethics, separating human rights as theological and political concepts. Then I will present a critical analysis of how human rights are used as a rhetorical appeal and how they are discussed. At the end I will suggest how the concept of human rights ought to be developed, so that it might continue to serve as a politically and theologically useful tool for modern Christians.

I will leave human rights aside for a moment, and proceed to 19th century Russia, to a small town, where our guide will be the author Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

3 Ivan Karamazov returns the entrance ticket he received from God

The best-known part of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* is the description, in Book Five, of the discussion between the two brothers Ivan and Alyosha Karamazov. This episode is also key to understanding the ideology of the novel. Before the crux of the novel, the reader has been introduced to the three Karamazov brothers – born from two marriages – Dimitri, Ivan and Alyosha, as well as their father Fyodor. The reader has also discovered that there is a fourth brother, Fyodor Karamazov's illegitimate son, Smerdyakov. There have also been descriptions of the brothers' childhood and the factors that influenced it, and the events of the few previous days have been laid out, which illuminate the relationships and conflicts between the characters and help us to understand their aspirations. Through these descriptions the author prepares us for the twists that comprise the main action of the book.[20]

20 An ideological counterpart to the arguments presented by Ivan in the fifth book is provided by the sixth book, where Alyosha has compiled the different sayings and deeds of the elder monk Zosima. Whereas Zosima describes events by expressing how different events and people have influenced and changed him, Ivan reports the news and purports to be discussing just the facts.

The middle brother, Ivan, presents himself as a rationalist and says he advocates pure Euclidean logic.[21] He challenges the novitiate monk Alyosha to a debate about the fundaments of Christianity and the religious outlook on life. Ivan sets out one of the most crucial issues in philosophy of religion: how can a world, in which unspeakable, radical evil – that no morally conscientious person could forgive – exists, believe in an omnipotent, beneficent and merciful God? Ivan has constructed his speech in such a way that only one conclusion is possible: even if God exists and even if at the end of time he offered a chance for salvation that atones for all conflicts, it is not possible for a moral person to accept the atonement offered by God, and he must on no account make use of the "entrance ticket", in other words, he must refuse God's grace.

Ivan's speech against God and the religious way of life contains testimonies to the power of evil gleaned from newspapers and other sources, in which the news and reports describe the mental cruelty and physical violence inflicted on children by adults. The commonality among the cases presented by Ivan is that the children's physical and emotional needs have been neglected, they have been deprived of the opportunity to learn and develop their talents, they have been shamed and abused, even killed. Those who had the opportunity and the obligation to take care of the children, their needs, welfare and development, have neglected their duties, misused their position and robbed the children of what was rightfully theirs.

Ivan presents himself as a rationalist relying solely on what can be observed, but in reality his entire argument against God and the religious life is based on a concept of natural **rights** belonging to children based on their humanity and that adults have a **duty** to uphold these rights. Ivan seems to assume – contrary to his own Euclidean logic – that these rights are undeniable and they do not have to derive logically from anything or be justified rationally. They are so important to Ivan, inalienable and crucial, that a rationalistic argument against the existence of God and faith in God can be constructed from them.

Ivan seems to find the evidence he has gathered to be damning, because indifference to children's rights and egregious violations of these rights prevent children from developing and growing into whole human beings. In order to grow into a human being a child must be able to live in safety, free from fear of violence. Growth can be irrevocably stalled if children are not provided with the protection, safety and affection beneficent for their development, or if they are not

21 Dostoyevsky was familiar with the work on Russian non-Euclidean geometry by Lobachevsky and made use of it in his book. Euclidean logic in this context refers to the idea that basic non-conflicting axioms can be used to derive any valid and non-conflicting conclusion.

provided with the opportunity that is their right as human beings to learn and to develop their skills and talents.

4 What human rights are about

Ivan's examples crystallize what human rights are fundamentally about. They express the prerequisites for living a life of human dignity, i.e., the concept of what a child needs to be able to grow and develop into a human being who is capable of fulfilling his or her role in society. Ivan's examples also reveal that human rights are not primarily an expression of a person's individuality, they are a system based on and maintained by the social structure, through which it obligates its members to behave so that rights are realized and at the same time guarantees its members the opportunity to accomplish the obligations that correspond to those rights.[22]

The foundation of Ivan's argument, the basic assumptions about inalienable human rights, reveal what is desirable and in accordance with **human dignity**. Living one's life with dignity presupposes that a community and its members commit themselves to guarantee to everyone who belongs to the community those things which are needed in order to grow into a human being and to carry out one's role as a **member of the community**. The concept that Ivan takes for granted reveals the nature of human rights: offenses against them are not aimed solely at the individual but at the community as well. Ultimately, they are a crime against Life itself: a cry echoing up to heaven against evil and injustice that no one can silence.[23]

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22 Kilcullen 2008. One of Ivan's examples concerns a wealthy land owner, who assembles his serfs and servants to watch his hunting dogs maul a boy who, by casting a stone, hurt the paw of the land owner's favorite dog. The child's mother is dragged to the front row. Without anyone intervening, the household watch as the dogs kill the child. From a human rights perspective a society and economy based on serfdom must be rejected because it prevents people from interacting as equal subjects of justice and subjugates them absolutely to the whims of their master. Ivan Karamazov only delves into the suffering of the child in that story, even though the example he has chosen also demonstrates in a terrible way that denying people their basic human rights prevents them from intervening in wrongdoing, no matter how egregious.

23 It is interesting to note that, as Ivan challenges Alyosha regarding the existence of God, he does not notice the flaws in his own argument. Contrary to what he believes, his challenge is not based on pure fact, but on an ethical-mythical conception of inalienable human dignity and natural rights. This concept cannot be justified using Euclidean methods, but it is a conviction that is based in faith (in something). Not even the analyses done by scholars of literature or philosophy of religion have addressed this issue. Ivan's mistake is nonetheless in keeping with the overall plot of Dostoyevsky's book: the story of his own fate does not proceed according to Euclidean logic but according to human rights metaphysics.

Ivan attempts to speak objectively by supporting his assertions with facts. Contrary to his own principles, he does not use "Euclidean" means to justify his argument about the infringing of children's rights, but his rationalism neglects another crucial aspect. *The Brothers Karamazov* describes four very different sons of the same father, who are connected by the fact that their key human rights have in one way or another not been realized. Instead of receiving the care, love, and nurturing that they required, they have been ignored or abandoned. Their father, Fyodor, has not only grossly neglected his own paternal duties, he was also considerably responsible for the fact that the children's mothers – three young women – died prematurely. The three brothers each in their own way demonstrate what happens to a human being when his fundamental human rights are constantly violated. In Ivan this is evident not only in the way he identifies – almost desperately – with the suffering children he describes, but also in his radical attempt to cut himself off from emotional ties and to base all his major life-decisions on Euclidean logic and facts.[24]

5 No human dignity without human worth

Ivan's examples illustrate a facet that is crucial to understanding human rights but which is often neglected. Human rights, as **social structures** that enable life with human dignity, are part of the very core of morality. They are usually only examined from the perspective of what they guarantee for a person who has rights as **claims** or **permission** towards others. Human rights also present everyone with **obligations**, either as specific demands based on position and role, or as general obligations to treat others in accordance with their human dignity. It is impossible to understand human rights from this perspective if they are considered as a concept referring to an individual's position. Human rights are based on the relationships between people and are dependent on them. A dignified life is not achieved solely by others treating me in accordance with my rights, but depends equally on my living in accordance with human dignity by respecting the human worth of those I live with.

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, the connection between human dignity and moral prerequisites is made especially clear in the character of the brothers' father, Fyodor Karamazov. He is not characterized as a braggart so much because of his uncontrolled alcoholism and sex life but by how he treats other people and uses them to achieve his own ends. Depriving his own children and the rest of his

24 For more on this, see Silbajoris 1963.

family has destroyed old Karamazov's interpersonal relationships, but his way of life has shaped his character so that his son Dmitri is provoked into asking why "people like him are allowed to live".[25] Fyodor Karamazov has not only destroyed the lives of others, he himself is corrupted as a human being.

Achieving human dignity requires living a life worthy of that dignity, with worth: people must be treated in accordance with human dignity but they must also treat others according to their worth. Human dignity (Menschenwürde) can only be achieved if people live their lives demonstrating equivalent worth (Wert).

6 Human dignity as a theological concept

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Alyosha draws on Christ's suffering as a counter-argument to the evidence Ivan has presented about the unnecessary suffering of children.[26] Ivan is not stumped by his brother's theological gambit, but indulges himself in a theological argument by reciting a poem which he has called *The Grand Inquisitor*.[27] In it, the Crucified One appears in 16th century Seville to meet the ordinary people for whom he once before descended to the earth. One day is enough to demonstrate to the Inquisition how dangerous Christ's visit is, and the authorities in charge of the Inquisition have him arrested.

In the evening, the Grand Inquisitor himself comes to talk with the prisoner. The prisoner remains silent, but the Grand Inquisitor's purpose is not to listen to Christ but to tell him how harmful Christ's teaching is and why the church represented by the inquisition has rejected it. According to the Grand Inquisitor, Christ has let the people down by rejecting the Devil in the desert. Instead of offering the people what they want, which is miracles, mysteries and absolute authority, he has left them with freedom - a burden they are unable to bear. The church, on the other hand, has, according to the Grand Inquisitor, responded to people's desperate longing and replaced freedom with what they want. The church provides them with bread, ceremonies and an absolute authority they can blindly obey. The Crucified One does not reply, but the discussion ends with him placing a kiss on the Grand Inquisitor's dry lips, after which he walks out into the night.

25 Book II, Chapter 6.

26 Alyosha represents a different kind of approach to human rights from Ivan. Alyosha can be characterized as a Wittgensteinian: morality is not dependant on rational deduction, but at its heart is about compassionate empathy towards others. For Alyosha, morality does not require justification, but motivation. Fagan 2006.

27 Book V, Chapter 5.

The poetic work *The Grand Inquisitor* demonstrates that Ivan's rationalism isn't without its flaws. As Alyosha points out, it is not a mockery but a show of respect for Christ. The brothers' discussion breaks down, and the theodicean problem presented by Ivan is not resolved. It would not have been possible, because there is no resolution that can be provided by rational, Euclidean logic. Ivan's tale is intended to show that Alyosha can't appeal to Christ in the matter of the suffering of innocent children. Christ's message is so harsh and difficult that people can't bear it, but gladly exchange it for an authority that promises a blanket solution.

Ivan rejects Christ as a response to the problem of the suffering of children and God's love. However, his metaphor illuminates an important connection between human rights and human dignity. The concept of humanity contained within the concept of human rights is a description of an active, not a static, person. From this perspective, human rights define the **state** that is necessary for a human being to be a human being: to make the **decisions** that they encounter in life, to perform the **tasks** set for them, and to fulfill their **obligations**. Living with others necessitates making moral decisions and the judgment that goes with it. People can consider different courses of action and make morally responsible decisions even if they have enough **freedom**.[28] The freedom, to which the Grand Inquisitor claims Christ has condemned people, is the freedom of an active moral subject, from which the church represented by the Grand Inquisitor wants to set the people free. The freedom offered by the Grand Inquisitor is freedom from moral responsibility, freedom from personal guilt, and freedom to flee to the protection of authority.

7 Human rights, human dignity and moral agency

The conversation between Ivan and Alyosha described by Dostoyevsky can be used to illustrate what human rights are philosophically about: they are **rights guaranteed by the community, that are necessary for a person to fulfill a member's role in that community.** The purpose of human rights is to secure **human dignity**. There are two sides to human dignity. Firstly, everyone has the right to be treated according to their dignity, which means that everyone else

28 In the story of the wealthy land owner, the serfs have – in addition to everything else – been deprived of the freedom to make autonomous and responsible decisions independently of their master's will. This is what makes them slaves, not the fact that they cannot choose their livelihood or residence, but that they have been deprived of the freedom to make moral decisions: none of them can imagine defying their overlord's decision to let the dogs maul the child to death. Even Ivan appears to accept their position and condition.

is obligated to respect their dignity (Menschenwürde). Secondly, every person's human dignity or, more accurately, their human worth (Wert) is dependent on how they treat others. In order to respect the dignity of others, one must have moral agency. Only a free person can be genuinely moral. Freedom is connected to people's dignity, because the way in which people use their freedom influences how their human worth is realized.[29] I shall return to the relationship between human rights and human dignity when I examine the distortions of human rights philosophy, but before that I shall consider other questions that are relevant to this discussion. Next I shall address whether human rights can be considered part of universal morality.

8 Are human rights a western concept?

Human rights are considered to be universal rights, and it is said that they belong to all people equally. At the same time, there is an idea that human rights are a western concept that western nations are trying to promulgate all over the world as a part of their political hegemony. If human rights are a universal political-ethical concept, then they should be apparent in the value systems of different religious and ideological traditions. On the other hand, we can talk about the history of human rights and can demonstrate where human rights philosophy began and what has influenced it. If western philosophers were the first to speak about human rights, then human rights are a western concept.

This reasoning may seem clear, but it is misleading. In order to understand what human rights are about, we must separate human rights as a term and as a concept. It is true that the **term** "human rights" (*ius naturale, Menschenrechte*) originates in western thought. It is, however, incorrect to state that the **concept** of human rights is of western origin. At the core of human rights is the idea that every society has a class of actions that includes actions that are recognized by the prevailing attitudes of that society as being either permissible or necessary. The concept of human rights can be summarized thus: human rights are the state granted by moral freedom that guarantees members of a community the opportunity to

29 The relationship between human dignity and human worth depends on the competence and capacity of the moral subject. Newborn babies are entirely dependent on the care of others, and cannot be regarded as moral subjects: they have full human dignity, but do not have the capacity to realize and manifest human worth through actions. Fully-empowered citizens are considered responsible agents: they are expected to have the competence to judge their actions and make moral decisions, and to have the capacity to implement them. Fully-empowered moral subjects manifest and execute their human worth through their actions when their actions harmonize with moral ideals.

engage in actions that the society has recognized as permissible and necessary.[30] Understood this way, human rights simply refer to a well-structured relationship between community and its members. It is difficult if not impossible to think of a human society that does not have this sort of concept of human rights, even if it does not have a set term or theoretical framework for it. From this perspective it is entirely possible to say that the concept of human rights is not a western export, but it exists, independently of time and place, in every moral system.[31]

On the other hand, it is undeniable that the content of human rights, i.e., how the relationship between community and its members should function, is the subject of many, contradictory, interpretations. This does not undermine the idea of regarding human rights as a universal and objective moral concept. Because societies and historical situations differ, the way in which the relationship between communities and their individual members is structured cannot be the same in all places and at all times.[32]

Although our way of understanding human rights may vary, it is important to find limits to the variation. Otherwise, anything could be called human rights simply by associating it with a cultural or historical expression of humanity. If human rights cannot be defined, then we drift into moral relativism and we lose the opportunity to examine critically our own culture and its conventions and those of other cultures. One should also note that human rights resemble other moral maxims in that being declared does not guarantee that they will be observed. They do, however, provide a tool for highlighting the criteria necessary for a good relationship between a society and its members. They can be used as a reference when it is necessary to justify why something is wrong or why someone can make demands that obligate others to act or refrain from action.[33]

30 Kilcullen 2008

31 Wenar 2007, 11–12.

32 Universality and objectivity are important preconditions for Christian faith as well. According to Christianity, the gospel message affects all peoples and Christ gathers all those who believe in him together as one Church. Universality and objectivity must, however, be applied to time and place, and how to preach the gospel in order to keep its message the same must constantly be reassessed. Stackhouse1984, 1–3, 5.

33 In most of Ivan Karamazov's examples, appealing to the Decalogue is not enough to demonstrate that the children have been mistreated. In the cases set forth by Ivan, the parents have defended their actions by referring to their duties to see to the child's upbringing, which includes physical disciplining. Appealing to human rights enables us to speak about human dignity and the demands that children's special needs place on their parents. Human rights protect not only physical immunity but also the integrity of the person. They place limitations on parents' power, and formulate the responsibilities of parents based on the children's needs.

9 The history of human rights

According to the predominant ideas of previous decades, human rights are a product of Enlightenment philosophy and they are inextricably linked with the intellectual heritage of western liberalism. This is how they are often presented in political rhetoric. Nevertheless, it appears that emphasizing the role of Enlightenment philosophy is part of the rhetoric of the Enlightenment philosophers themselves, according to whom it was important to forswear all that was old, because it represented a backward-looking tradition. By emphasizing the way in which their thinking differed from the earlier tradition they wanted to mark a radical departure from what had preceded it and to build something entirely new – to start a revolution.[34] However, recent interest in the Middle Ages has challenged this perception.

The concept of human rights and its key categories have developed over the course of centuries in European societies. This development has been influenced by philosophical and juridical scholarship, but also by the juridical practices of different communities, concepts of property, trade and governance, as well as ecclesiastical disputes and theological discussions. Enlightenment philosophers did not come up with anything new, they merely compiled the thoughts and postulations of preceding centuries.[35] Beginning with the Enlightenment, the emphasis of the discussion has shifted more and more towards the rights of the individual, and rights as an expression of the relationship between a well-

34 Human rights thought is strongly linked to the French Revolution and the seceding of the United States from Britain. In both France and the United States there was a desire to renounce the old system and to overturn it. By overturning the old regime they tried to build a new world that would not be based on the whims of an absolute ruler but on freedom, fraternity and equality. The fact that human rights were not extended to cover all people, but only those who in many aspects resembled the leaders of the revolutions themselves, perfectly illustrates the Enlightenment's concept of the division of power and labor in a well-structured human society. See, e.g., Hobsbawn 1962.

35 Tierney 1997, 5–7.

structured society and its members has received less attention.[36] From the point of view of modern human rights thought, the discussion regarding natural rights and individual rights in particular, as well as the theological disputes pertaining to rights of ownership and church authority, especially the argumentation regarding the power of the pope, are important. The understandings of human rights we recognize today evolved gradually from these debates.[37]

10 Objective right and subjective rights

Historians of European thought and jurisprudence have demonstrated how over the centuries the understanding of justice (*ius*) has become consolidated in legal terminology on the one hand as an **objective right** representing the ontological order of reality, and on the other hand as **subjective rights** belonging to each individual human being. Previous scholarship has regarded subjective rights as an invention of the Enlightenment and they have been seen as conflicting with objective right. However, if subjective rights are not considered as a product of the Enlightenment, the conflict disappears.[38] Objective right and subjective rights are not mutually contradictory, because subjective rights can be justified – and prior to the Enlightenment were justified – by appealing to the idea proclaimed by Christianity of every person's dignity and autonomy deriving from Creation. In order for human beings to operate in a community and perpetuate the objective order ordained at Creation and implement the justice that manifests God's will, they must have the moral space to act. For this reason they have the subjective right – that is, the **freedom** – to do things that are not forbidden by the community. Genuine action requires freedom which includes the space to consider and assess

36 Castberg 1968, 18–19. Modern western thinking is seen as emphasizing the individual. Both supporters and detractors of western tradition emphasize this trait. However, this interpretation is misleading. Western societies have not been based around the individual, but around different communities. Society has always had numerous agents: neither the church nor the state was able to gain the upper hand, instead, over Centuries, each acquired its own arena of operations. After the formation of nation-states, churches represented a parallel, but alternative approach to reality. Similarly, political life does not consist solely of states and their representatives, but of different parties and interest groups and social organizations that people are involved in. Westerners have for centuries been operating in different communities on whose actions a civil society is based. Critics of individualism place a premium on the community perspective, where the benefit to the community is regarded as more important that the benefit to the individual. Traditional political collectivism does not, however, favor civil societies or other manifestations of free human cooperation, but within its framework communal actions and communality must be realized through the guidance of an autocratic authority and in accordance with its established forms. Stackhouse 1984, 4–5.

37 Pihlajamäki & Mäkinen & Varkemaa 2007.

38 For different interpretations, see Tierney 1997, 13 –42.

the situation, different aims and goals and alternative actions. The freedom of the subject is necessary also because without it people cannot be recognized as rational beings possessing **reason** and **conscience**.[39]

The starting point of jurisprudence divided into objective right and subjective rights explains why rights have, throughout history, been justified philosophically by restoring them to the joint **interests** of people, on the other hand as the expression of **will**, a condition of intentional action. Rights have been combined with interests based on the idea that the rights confirmed by the community guarantee that people can aspire to and promote the things that they consider to be good. Interests can also be prioritized and can also be – or attempted to be – defined as common to all people. Based on this classification a catalogue can be drawn up of the key rights that guarantee the most important interests for all people. Interest-based jurisprudence approaches an idea of objective justice, which concerns the whole of creation. Behind these interests lies the idea of shared humanity, based on which things can be regarded as good or worthwhile for all people. The problem of an interest-based jurisprudence, however, is that it appears to equate interests (or what is good) with rights, which obscures the concept of justice.[40]

Will-based jurisprudence does not examine people from the perspective of interests so much as from the perspective of goals set by will. According to this view, having a right to something means that people can act as if a sovereign ruler in a moral state dictated by rights, and that other actors have a duty not to set themselves at odds with the right-holder's will when his (intended) actions are not forbidden. A will-based jurisprudence considers people as autonomic moral subjects, for whom rights guarantee the state to pursue their own lives based on their own notions of what is good. The problem with this way of thinking is that it binds rights with the agent's ability to act and make demands of others. If rights are only based on the agent's will, than those with lowered capacity have no rights.[41]

Modern jurisprudence contains elements of both interest and will-based jurisprudence. Rights are often grouped in four classes depending on their

39 Tierney 1997, 46, 68.

40 Interest-based jurisprudence is based on the same moral-philosophical principal as consequential moral theories: good is the fundamental concept of morality. Consequentialists are often considered individualists, but the starting point they have adopted - the idea of interests as something connecting all humans - resembles theories in which humans are said to have an objectively identifiable essence.

41 Wenar 2007, 9–10.

relationship between the person with the right and the other members of society. On this basis it is possible to discuss rights as privileges, claims, powers, and immunity.[42] Understood in this way, rights are abstract preconditions for the ability to act.[43]

In order to live and act a person needs material things, like the help of others and their cooperation. Financial rights, which include, e.g., the right to sufficient income, have been regarded as relative newcomers in the discussion of human rights – having only been formulated during the 20th century, even though the issue was already being discussed in a heated way in the Middle Ages.[44] The debate that began during the 14th century about the position of the mendicant brothers, poverty, and property, gradually led to the idea that a person owns at least himself and whatever he needs to survive and act.[45] In order for people to act in a community, engage in a profession, etc., they may also need possessions. No one should put themselves in a position where they are a constant burden to others, so long as they are able to support themselves by working. Instead, whoever lacks what is necessary to survive, has the right even to steal food to sustain life when other members of the community do not fulfill their duty to guarantee the basic conditions of life for everybody.[46]

The third question, originating in the Middle Ages, that affects how modern approaches are formulated, is the question of who holds power. The debate began as a squabble between the pope and earthly rulers, and it went on for centuries. All parties in the debate agreed that all power originates with God, but disagreed over who it was that God had granted the power to reign on earth. The supporters of

42 The division is derived from the American legal theorist Wesley Hohfeld (1879 –1918). Rights as **privileges** guarantee the liberty to perform acts the refraining from which is not a (moral or juridical) duty. A person has a **claim**, if someone else has a (moral or juridical) duty to behave towards them according to the terms of that obligation. The rightholder who can alter others' rights has **competence**: for example, a bishop has the competence to either ordain or not ordain a candidate for priesthood. Right can also be an **immunity**: in a society that is not affiliated with a particular religion the citizens cannot be obligated to follow or not to follow a particular faith. Wenar 2007, 3–5.

43 Abstract rights that guaranteed freedom of action are also called first-order rights. They include central tenets of political liberalism such as freedom of religion, thought and opinion, freedom of property, the right to choose a residence and profession and rights against the state ensured by the Rechtsstaat principle.

44 Social, civil and financial rights are classed as so-called second-order rights. The social-democratic and social-liberal movements have maintained their prominence in political activity. Bypassing these rights by emphasizing abstract citizens' rights is one of the main criticisms of the socialist world against the west.

45 Varkemaa 2005.

46 Pihlajamäki & Mäkinen & Varkemaa 2007, 118–137; Tenkku 1981, 303; Mäkinen 2003, 153–156.

the pope considered spiritual power to rank higher than earthly power. According to their interpretation, Christ had given Peter, and the Bishop of Rome as Peter's successor, the keys to the heavenly kingdom, i.e., the highest spiritual authority. According to others, this granted the pope both spiritual and earthly authority, which he could in turn delegate to an emperor or king.[47]

According to this interpretation, the earthly ruler does not have any authority over spiritual matters and thus no authority over the pope or his church. According to critics of this interpretation, legitimate earthly authority, such as the authority of the Roman Emperor, existed long before the church, which is why the pope cannot rely on his spiritual authority to claim authority over earthly matters. On the other hand, earthly authority does not have the right to interfere in the sphere of spiritual matters. The state and rulers are necessary to maintain order, but a ruler who does not act to promote the general good of the people he rules over has lost his right to rule. At the end of the Middle Ages, the idea was also put forth that earthly authority did not belong to the church or to rulers, but to the people, and the ruler merely uses it on behalf of the people and for their benefit.[48]

The development of the **concept of the individual** over the course of the Middle Ages is crucial to jurisprudence. In the philosophy of antiquity, a person was considered in terms of his essence. According to Aristotle's definition, humans are rational beings, and the success of human life can be estimated based on how well a person is able to realize his essence. Many Christian theologians adopted the concept of human essence based on Creation and connected it to the idea of humans as the image of God. There are nevertheless aspects of Christianity that are not easily compatible with this essentialism: God did not create essences but individuals, and salvation is not promised to essences but to the faithful.

From the essentialism of antiquity the idea of reason as the most characteristic feature of a human being was absorbed into western theology. In addition to this, Christian medieval thinkers characterized human beings as having **conscience** and **will**. Because of these, every person differs from everybody else, which makes everyone an individual. An individualizing conscience is an important theological concept, because it makes it possible for people to confess their sins and take moral and juridical responsibility for their own actions. Similarly, the

47 Ivan Karamazov also participates in this discourse. He compiles a pamphlet regarding the division of spiritual and earthly power that receives a lot of attention. It generates a lot of excitement among some of the monks, because according to Ivan's pamphlet the church should lead society, so that discord between different ideologies would not damage the connections between humans. Others do not know how to react to the pamphlet: is Ivan serious or is it a crude joke?

48 Tenkku 1981, 300–304; Pihlajamäki & Mäkinen & Varkemaa 2007, 180–182.

problematics of individual will are central to the theological debate about Fall and salvation.[49]

The emphasis on individuality is nowadays strongly associated with a way of thinking that can be called **hedonistic individualism**.[50] In intellectual history, however, the concept of the individual has been shaped in a completely different context. The individual, *individuum*, means indivisible. Identifying people as individuals depends on respecting their **integrity** and recognizing that they have reason, conscience, will, and a body that requires nourishment and care, and that they must be treated in accordance with this. The development of the concept of the individual necessitated the adoption of new ways of thinking in society as well: the medieval society based on estates, in which everyone's station and opportunities were based on family and birth, began to crumble and was gradually replaced by a system based on a general social contract.[51]

A **contractarian society** is based on the interaction between people who aspire to things they consider to be good, and the interaction between different communities. A contractarian society is also a society of (human) rights: the limits of human action and interaction are not determined by birth, estate or profession, but by shared humanity and citizenship. The purpose of the basic elements of a contractarian society is to guarantee essential human liberties. They are not, however, unlimited personal liberties but **civil liberties** on the basis of which people can act together as citizens, participate in economic life and lead what they consider to be a good life. It is important to note that human rights are not primarily an agreement between citizens, but a moral-juridical state, the creation and maintaining of which is foremost the responsibility of the state.

I have briefly outlined the historical development of human rights and the theological roots of these paradigms in the western tradition. Next we ought to consider what constitutes human rights in the light of Lutheran social ethics.

11 Human rights in Lutheran (social) ethics

What are human rights and what category do they belong to? When we consider human rights in the light of Christianity, are we speaking of a political or a

49 Pihlajamäki & Mäkinen & Varkemaa 2007, 253, 256–257, 266–267.
50 A good example of this is the presentation delivered by Bishop Hilarion at the previous session of Lutheran-Orthodox dialogues.
51 Pihlajamäki & Mäkinen & Varkemaa 2007, 179–182

theological concept? If human rights are a political concept, what can theology have to say about them? In order to answer these questions, I must return to the episode from Dostoyevsky that I discussed in the beginning. When Ivan Karamazov presents his evidence of the human rights violations against children, what is he speaking of?

Children are not political actors, nor are they citizens. They have not formulated their own life plans, nor do they have a distinct concept of things that are worth aspiring to. The offenses against children seem especially damning precisely because children are unable to ensure for themselves that their basic needs are met or to guarantee that their own interests are observed. Their rights can only be achieved if others take care to meet the obligations that underpin these rights. Children's rights clearly demonstrate that human rights cannot be defined by the individual: precisely because children are incapable of defining their own interests or expressing their own will, protecting their rights is of great importance.

Inherent in human rights is the idea of what a person needs to be able to act as a fully-empowered moral subject, but they also determine what a person needs in order to become a fully-empowered moral subject. Children's human rights express that growing into a human being necessitates being able to grow up and develop in peace and safety, to learn to use one's talents, practice them and to appropriate what previous generations have discovered. Children's human rights express a societal concept of the good life and balanced development. They also demonstrate that human rights are not simply a political concept, but they envelop the society's **normative** view of **anthropology**. Even though human rights are foremost a concept of political philosophy and social ethics, only by examining them in the light of a holistic system of values and meaning can their full depth be appreciated.

The concept of human rights includes the idea of a person as an active agent who lives with others in a society. From the perspective of Lutheran social ethics this is the correct standpoint. Humans were created to live together with others, and not even the Fall has changed this basic set-up. All people were created by God and have fallen, but they have also been redeemed. Despite their sin, people use their reason to act in social matters. People are called on to serve their neighbors in this world, and the faithful cannot abjure worldly activity and retreat to live apart from others. In the Lutheran tradition, social activity has been regarded favorably, be it work, family life or getting involved in societal matters. The concept of human rights includes a strong obligation of reciprocity and a duty to treat others in a manner prescribed by their rights. Reciprocity and respecting the rights of others

can be seen as a political manifestation of the **golden rule**.[52] From this point of view the basic aspects of the Lutheran social ethics can very well be described with the help of human rights.

The normative view of human anthropology embedded in human rights can be clarified using a pair of concepts central to Lutheran theology, **faith and love**. Human existence, life, salvation, and everything that a person owns, is a gift from God. They become a person's own, when that person accepts them with the faith that God has granted. The idea of inalienable human dignity which is central to human rights philosophy can only be understood if it is considered against a background described above. Human dignity cannot be inalienable and inviolable, if it is based on human characteristics or deeds, but it must be something that is bestowed, a gift. At its heart, human dignity is always a matter of faith, and no society can respect human rights if its members do not believe that every member of society has human dignity.

Through Christ, God bestows Himself and everything good to humans, and redeemed Christians become Christ to their neighbors. Their mission is to love their neighbors as Christ loves them. Loving one's neighbor entails putting one's self in their position and responding to their needs. Using political language, this can be expressed as respecting the human rights of the other. Human rights have been used, among other things, to define what human needs are, and respecting human rights is a social action, by which these needs are aimed to be met. In order to ensure that these needs are met, rights are codified into law: the society as a whole acts as a guarantor that human rights will be observed. From this perspective, human rights assign people and societies certain demands, which are based on the needs of one's neighbors.[53]

According to Lutheran theology, Christ is the bond between faith and love: in faith Christ is present as charity. A Christian's life is receiving God's grace and being open to it but is also a battle against sin. The obligation to love is concretized in the neighbor and his needs, and people must constantly battle against their selfishness and narcissism. People have been declared righteous, but Christ makes them righteous. They have been pardoned, but they must strive without ceasing. A similar duality is evident in human rights, in that every person has been granted human dignity regardless of individual merit or achievement. Nevertheless, people's dignity, human worth is dependent on their action according to that dignity. Human worth is a moral concept. It is not a gift but based on a human

52 Kvist 2005; Raunio 2005; Pihlajamäki & Saarinen 2006; Raunio 2006; Mannermaa 1983, 65–69.
53 Mannermaa 1989, 81–85.

being's action and how he or she treats other people. The issue can be summarized like this: Human dignity is received as a **gift**, but it can be realized only in a reciprocal relationship with other people when a person responds through his or her actions to the **demand** of love.

According to the Lutheran view, a fallen person is not truly free, even though he or she might be capable of judgment or making decisions regarding earthly matters. True freedom would necessitate an uncorrupted moral sense and freedom from sin.[54] Paradise, where humanity had true freedom, is described as a timeless and immutable state, where people are at ease and all their needs are satisfied. In Paradise nothing changes. The Fall, the desire to know the difference between good and evil and be like God, brings about the change: human actions start to have consequences. The Fall banishes humanity from Paradise, it means separation from God, conflict between people and even conflict between humankind and nature. The desire to be knowledgeable like God achieves nothing but to not only deny humanity the knowledge of what God knows but they also lose the knowledge of what they ought to know about God. At the same time, it is this thirst for knowledge that directs people. Knowledge means the loss of innocence, but it brings knowledge of morality and responsibility. Of necessity we live in a post-Fall world, and all our decisions reflect this. People are no longer free, but they must make decisions and act. In human rights discourse the word "freedom" is frequently used. According to the research done on the conceptual history of rights, this does not mean freedom to choose actions or things according to one's own desire, but the freedom to do things that are not forbidden. The freedom connected with human rights is the freedom of a moral agent to assess goals, consider options and take action. Speaking about freedom as an inalienable part of human rights means committing to a view of humanity in which humans are moral beings responsible for their own actions. This view is compatible with Christian beliefs. The freedom that enables moral responsibility makes it possible for a person to do wrong. Freedom can be used do to both good and evil. Denying freedom, however, leads to the societal model favored by the Grand Inquisitor.

In a civil society based on human rights there is no moral or political authority that could dictate societal solutions. Respecting human dignity means that people are recognized as fully-empowered political agents. In a functioning civil society, people promote what they consider to be good through different organizations, political parties and interest groups. The church also participates in the discussion about societal good and moral right from its own perspective. Different views constantly engage in open and public exchanges of ideas. Decisions are based on

54 Kvist 2005.

the outcomes of these discussions. The position of various minorities is protected against arbitrariness by the majority. Office-holders' performance is assessed through regular elections. Points of contention can be criticized, earlier decisions that have demonstrably failed can be repealed and things can be changed.

A civil society based on human rights is not perfect, nor are its ideals always met. From the point of view of Lutheran theology a society structured in this way not only provides the church with an arena in which to operate, but it also corresponds to the Lutheran concept of a good **earthly regiment**. Human rights and human rights philosophy are not, from the perspective of Lutheran social ethics, something alien to Christianity that should be evaluated from the outside. The central tenets of human rights philosophy can be developed further using Lutheran theology, and Lutheran political theology can use human rights concepts to describe its own priorities.

12 The future of human rights

Human rights philosophy can be connected with individualism, and it can be regarded as undermining social responsibility. Appealing to human rights can be a mechanism by which different minority groups demand protection and different preconditions for justifying and securing their own way of life.[55] In the background of appealing to one's own rights seems to be the idea of the interest as the justification for the right: people think that having the interest creates the right to it. This demand is based on faulty logic. Appealing to one's own rights does however demonstrate how important the concept of human rights has become, but on the other hand it demonstrates how the concept has become obscured. We have drifted from the intellectual tradition from which the concept of human rights emerged. Nowadays human rights discourse is all about making demands of others. The fact that human rights are about reciprocity and mutual respect and their essential purpose is to guarantee **societal good** has been forgotten. At the same time the legal conformance of moral action has been side-stepped: people are not shaped purely based on what happens to them and how others treat them but also based on what they do and how they treat others. Respecting human dignity requires that others treat me in accordance with my dignity, but if I want to actualize this worth within myself then I have to treat others according to their dignity. Human dignity could be called the objective side of human rights, the respecting of which requires the state to implement laws. Human worth, on the

55 Bishop Hilarion 2005.

other hand, can only be achieved by each person individually: it is subjective. It cannot be ordered by law, instead it is a state where a person's freedom and responsibility are expressed.

Should the concept of human rights be abandoned or can the philosophy be used to fix injustices and improve society? In my view, human rights philosophy is a significant socio-political innovation that crystallizes centuries' worth of debate and insight. The concept of human rights includes something about universal morality. Even though human rights, like other political concepts, are a clumsy tool for analyzing and redressing injustice, the formulation and codification of human rights has enabled marked improvement in societies and human lives. Even in a society where human rights are inscribed in law and invigilated, cruelty can still take place, as described by Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov*, but they can be condemned by appealing to human rights. When such crimes are made apparent, those who are judged guilty are punished and assistance is extended to the victims. Human dignity and human worth are concepts that allow us to express Christian anthropology in language that is understandable in a political context. The intellectual history of human rights reveals aspects of the thought that have been neglected in recent discourse but are nonetheless preserved in the Christian churches. By bringing these ideas to the table, churches can add depth to the discourse and make their own contributions. At the same time, theological anthropology can be made accessible to those who might be accustomed to political language but are tone-deaf to theological language.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FROM A CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW

Father Vladimir Hulap

Priest of the Church of the Holy Equal-to-Apostles Mary Magdalene

The Bishops' Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church held on 24th-29th of June, 2008, assessed the current states and priorities of religious life in the following way: "The number of congregations, monasteries and faith schools has significantly increased. Churches are being built and repaired. Despite these achievements, the Bishops' Conference considers it necessary to correct the trends and priorities of the Church's recovery so that more attention would be paid to the spiritual dimension of Church life, the education and upbringing of God's people and to the Orthodox testimony in today's world… The Bishops' Conference finds it necessary, at all levels of the Church, to continue to consider the role of education in the life of the Church and society."[56] Thus considering the questions of Christian upbringing in the discussions between the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, can help us better understand the common tasks and problems that we counter in this field.

The Orthodox view on education and upbringing is based on the premises of Christian anthropology. Christianity does not view man as a random, biological product of evolution nor as a "social animal." Man is God's unique spiritual-physical creation that is created in His image and lives in connection with Him (Gen. 1:27). When man lost his all-encompassing and harmonious connection to God after the Fall, he became incapable of true interaction with other people and of a responsible attitude to creation around him. God became incarnate in order to restore this destroyed connection. Thus He made us "participate in the divine nature" (2. Peter 1:4) and called men into sanctity, so that "Christ is formed" in us (Galatians 4:19). Christian education thus strives to find God's image in man. Its aim is to help man to form the correct type of relationship with God, his neighbors and the surrounding world within the framework of a comprehensive and harmonious development of his personality. In this broad sense the process of education and upbringing continues throughout one's whole life. The basis for

56 Document "Questions of the Inner Life and Outside Works of the Russian Orthodox Church", paragraph 2; 12.

man's real flourishing and self-fulfillment is, however, created during childhood and early youth when the personality is formed.

"Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him" (Psalm 127:3). Thus from a Christian point of view every child (even the unborn) has an indisputable worth as God's gift. This gift obligates the parents and those who are entrusted before God with nurturing the child to take responsibility for its care. Responsibility for the upbringing expands to concern the Church, to whom "all nations" have been entrusted (Matthew 28:19), including the young generation of the country where each Church does its pastoral duties. This is why the Church's aspirations for being an active participant in education and upbringing are based on the Church's character: the Church knows its responsibility before God and towards the young generation and the whole of society and strives to fulfill its duties in various ways.

We can state that Christ is called a "teacher" (Matthew 8:19) in the gospel and his apostles are called "disciples" (Matthew 5:1). The New Testament texts do not only preach the gospel but they also contain teachings, exhortations and advice. It is not only a question of the intellectual exploration of the truths of the doctrines of faith and ethical rules, but also of the believer's lifestyle changes to conform to Christ's orders. The connection between teaching (education) and the implementation of acquired skills (upbringing) was clearly brought out in the early Christian Catechumenate. The Apostolic Tradition, presumed to have been written by Hippolytus of Rome in about 215, sets out how after a three-year study of Christianity, in an examination before baptism, the bishop specifically asked the one to be baptized what real fruits their life had borne: "When they are chosen who are to receive baptism, let their lives be examined, whether they have lived honorably while catechumens, whether they honored the widows, whether they visited the sick, and whether they have done every good work" (Chapter 20). The well-known theologian and pedagogue, dean V. Zenkovsky, the Head of the pedagogical section of St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris, has said the following when speaking on the integral connections faith and life: "The function of religion has been given to us as an innate resource, but only in spiritual deeds; in spiritual life it gets nourishment and finds a purpose." True Christian upbringing makes man capable of independent and responsible life. It does not have to force, but can encourage faith and activate love, encourage man's inner stability and the formation of his social identity, offer the reference points that are the basis for his life and it can teach him to live responsibly in society.

Education as a Transfer Process of Tradition

Education and upbringing refer to processes where traditions and world views, ethics and a way of life are passed on. Descriptions of this type of connection, that exists between generations as a primary way of passing on the experience of faith, are already available in the Old Testament: "things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to each their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands" (Psalm 78:3-7). This process crosses the narrow boundaries of passing on traditions from one generation to another and lifts our understanding of tradition to a whole new level where the individual and society are understood to exist before God between the past ("memory") and the future ("implementation").

An upbringing in the framework of tradition is a serious challenge to today's Christianity, because the concept of "tradition" has come under criticism and even derision in liberal society ranging from veiled indifference or skepticism to openly revolutionary attempts at destroying tradition. Furthermore, within the framework of rationalist consumerist society as well as cultural and economic globalization we can observe an aspiration for a global and thorough re-evaluation of traditions and traditional values which is also mirrored in the educational system.

Tradition is, by its nature, however, one of the basic principles in the progress of mankind's civilization and culture. Contrary to instinctive animal imitation, it makes a civilization and a culture out of a diverse group and this is why the connection between civilization and tradition is fundamental and integral. At the same time, tradition is a characteristic instrument for maintaining and developing society because the power of tradition has always been and will always be a guarantee of continuity, trustworthiness and progress. A complete renunciation of tradition would be impossible – except for a total annihilation of civilization and culture, in other words, the suicide of society. Tradition is often portrayed as the absolute counterforce of progress. But as the Orthodox theologian Jaroslav Pelikan has shown in his work, "The Vindication of Tradition": "no leap forward in mankind's history is a leap from the place, where one is now, but is a leap from motion – the starting point is where we used to be before." Tradition is therefore an instrument, representative and mechanism of man's historical development. As a central sociocultural component it makes possible the uninterrupted connection

of generations. At the same time, the autonomic consciousness and, in the field of ethics, the heteronomic character of tradition in the modern society makes it an important mechanism for controlling social processes – a type of vaccination that gives immunity against ideological propaganda structures and political radicalism.

This is why the connection between tradition and upbringing is fundamental from an Orthodox point of view. Without tradition there is no education and vice versa. It is not that tradition is passed onward without question or comment. On the contrary, tradition is open to questions and asking such questions is very fruitful. This is why it is necessary for the development of Christian education that tradition is constantly re-evaluated in the reality of the changing modern world and that it is made dynamic and is adequately brought to public attention (e.g., the 2008 Bishops' Conference felt it was important "to begin creating a modern Catechism for the Orthodox Church"[57]). Clearly phrased answers to today's questions are also needed (an example of which is: "Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" which were ratified at the Bishops' Conference in 2000). Seclusion and ghettoization must be avoided and one's presence in society must be active, which means, among other things, carrying social responsibility and testifying through deeds.

Value Education

The transmission of the values that give culture stability and create social order are a part of tradition since they contain a normative element. Today's worry that the system of values is dimming and eroding is not just an older generation's traditional critique of youth. Christianity today has to face one of the greatest challenges of today's world: secularism, which actively strives to push religion out of all aspects of society, pluralism, which renounces absolute truth and proclaims the equality of all world views, and individualism, which gives every person the right to make independent choices from a wide spectrum of values. A catastrophe of values is very real because in the ethics of today's society there is a greater tendency than previously to abandon objective ethical norms and to seek to justify man's selfish interests. Mass media (especially the Internet) has an especially important role in this process since the youth spend more time with them than they do at school or with their parents. The negativity of mass media,

57 Document "Questions of the Inner Life and Outside Works of the Russian Orthodox Church", paragraph 21

their propensity for oversimplification and their "neophilia" places constant stress on traditional values and norms.

Society's system of values cannot, however, be built on calculating egotism or "supermarket ethics," where everyone can choose a set values suitable for himself. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn has stated: "If society's spiritual powers have dwindled and become empty, not even the best system of government or industrial progress can save it from death – the tree will not stay upright if it has a rotten core." For exactly this reason values are a theme that more and more interests politicians, scholars and pedagogues. The Church must have the right and the opportunity to take part actively in the creation and appraisal of society's system of values, also at the stage where a person's system of values is moulded – i.e., childhood and youth. The Church must then provide an opportunity to get acquainted with the answers that religion gives to life's basic questions. Fyodor Dostoyevsky has encapsulated the consequences of the destruction of religious ethic's roots in his dramatic thesis: "If God doesn't exist, anything is permissible." The prophetic nature of this statement has been proved by the historical events of the 20th Century. Still, the post-Soviet secular educational system, which has been freed from the prescriptions of communist ideology but also has ended up in a world-view vacuum, often neglects questions dealing with the purpose of life and life's central values.

Religious education, like any other real education, is based on values. The normativity inherent in Christian tradition educates man not only for Church life but for government, too. Therefore a person who has been made social through methods of Christian upbringing is with greater probability a dutiful and responsible citizen. Neither Marxist collectivist ideology nor any market economy principle based on success and consumerism can develop the ethics of active solidarity. But the Christian principle of loving one's neighbor that is absorbed through upbringing can be the basis of such ethics: the person who thinks of himself and his loved ones as unique members of creation loved by God will strive to respect and love other persons instead of scorning them; he who in childhood has learned to share can do so as an adult. It is especially important in education to show what is the relationship between fundamental values (teleological ethics) on the one hand, and the social structures and behavioral models in which these values can be implemented (ethics of means and ends) on the other hand. Family is meaningless when people are not brought up to understand the fundamental meaning of faith, patience and selfless love for a happy marriage. Safety and stability are impossible to achieve when people are not brought up to respect the law. The aspiration for peace loses its meaning if the youth are not brought up to be brave and determined in defending and maintaining it. The Church can

have a significant role in the moulding of such views: if the state, for example, were to proclaim it necessary to educate the youth in tolerance and respect for other cultures, it would be logical that the Russian Orthodox Church, which has for centuries defined the national culture, ethics and mentality and which has vast experience in peaceful co-existence with other religions (throughout its great geographical territory there have never been religious wars), could take part in the educational process for common stability, peace and good neighborliness in society (fostering what Dostoyevsky called "universal humanity" or what the religious philosopher I.A. Ilyin called "supranationalism").

The Places and Forms of Religious Education

Religious education and upbringing happens in:

- the family
- Sunday schools
- denominational (non-government funded) secondary schools
- courses on religion in government- and municipally-funded schools

The family is of utmost importance in religious socialization. Questions on the meaning of life and the fundamental moral guidelines arise during childhood and adolescence and answers to them are found, above all, within the family. Dean V. Zenkovsky notes: "The child cannot and should not be isolated from the surrounding world, but the child can and should be raised into freedom, in other words his spiritual strength should be increased so that his environment will not dishearten him. Pedagogues should help him in his childhood searches and should be a source and reserve of strength when he needs it. Religious upbringing is not the family's job only when the child lives entirely in the family but also, and above all, when the child becomes distanced from the family, goes to school and becomes influenced by his peers and the whole of life. The family's role at this stage becomes ever more full of responsibility: it is then that the family's spiritual reserves of strength can be especially valuable for the adolescent, assuming that the family is not spiritually fragmented, but lives a common spiritual life." It is not only a question of overcoming a pluralist world view but rather of preparing children for an independent and responsible life, the bases of which are Christian values in a pluralist world: "in the world, but not of the world." Specifically for this reason the 2008 Bishops' Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church noted: "Today, the family must be taken as a special object of the care of the Church, the state and the society. The spiritual and moral characteristics of the new generations

are moulded in the best possible way in the family... Our activities in society must oppose the blurring of the picture of what family is: family should still be seen as a union of fidelity between man and woman where the conditions necessary to raise children are created... In its dialogue with the state and secular society the Russian Orthodox Church will emphasize that in addition to material support, families also need moral and spiritual support, including support of the family's religious foundation."

It is in the family where the dialectics between the theory and practice of pedagogy are most strongly brought forth – teaching by personal example is an extremely important part of family upbringing ("therefore I urge you to imitate me," 1 Corinthians 4:16). The child's Christian identity – e.g., his ability to live a free and responsible life in the surrounding world – is formed through experiences and the comprehension of what happens in the family. Part of this process is the family's religious life – "the small church". The parents are the child's main pedagogues and the school cannot in any circumstances replace the family and all that the child should receive from its family. A central prerequisite of the right type of upbringing is not only the bright Christian role models of the past and present but above all the personal reliability of the parents. In this case, upbringing can be much more than just ethical teaching where the child is told what he should and should not do. The values that are the basis for upbringing are not only norms prescribed by the law or proclaimed by the parents but they come to be internalized personally and become profoundly internalized models of behavior. In an opposite case, there is a great danger that the significant Russian pedagogue K.D. Ushinsky (1824-1871) warned about: "If we teach children to listen to the words of high morals which they don't understand and especially which they cannot feel within themselves, we will bring them up into hypocrisy."

Christian education has always been closely linked with the system of parishes, who provided it (today mainly in the form of Sunday schools and other educational projects). The ecclesiological element in Christian education is very important for the Orthodox: becoming a part of the Church, being raised into and participating in Church life as well as creating a Church environment that is necessary for the child's development. During the communist era religious education was strictly forbidden whereas over the past two decades Sunday schools have become an essential part of today's parish life (currently there are around 11,000 Sunday schools in the Russian Orthodox Church). This does, however, contain a great danger of the Christian educational process becoming formalized. A possible result may be that children are given a certain amount of doctrinal and liturgical information which, however, is in no way reflected into their everyday life and does not promote more in-depth participation in the life of the Church. This is

why the current challenge for the Russian Orthodox Church is to develop the type of Orthodox pedagogy that would respond to the needs of today's children and youth in a creative fashion.

The Russian Orthodox Church and Secular Schools

The ideal educational system is based on the close co-operation between the Church, the family and the secular and religious schools, but the reality of today's Russia is far from this ideal. That is why the document approved at the Bishops' Conference in 2000, "Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" states the following: "From an Orthodox point of view it is to be hoped that the whole educational system would be built on religious principles and based on Christian values. With its age-old traditions, the Church, however, does respect the secular school and is ready to build relations to it from the starting point of acknowledging man's freedom. In this context, it is impossible for the Church to accept that anti-religious or anti-Christian views are imposed on students knowingly or that a materialist world view would get a monopoly status." The Orthodox school and high school systems are truly only in an evolutionary stage. There are many difficult legislative and economic problems standing in its way that are caused by it not being possible to get government funding. Current Sunday schools, whose buildings (which before the Revolution numbered c. 37,000) were confiscated from the Church, often do not have enough rooms or pedagogical resources to implement widespread schooling programs outside of the parish. This is why the question of teaching the basics of religious culture in governmental and municipal schools, which are the only schools open to all, is very topical. Steps taken in recent years to include a course "The Basics of Orthodox Culture" (or something similar) into curricula in many parts of the Russian Federation have met with much negative feedback from mass media and some representatives of the administrative structures and influential members of society.[58] As the main obstacles to such a course, its opponents usually mention the secular nature of the government and the schooling system, the dangers of imposing a forced world-view onto children, Russian society's multi-denominational nature, etc.

First we must mention that the Church in no way intends to replace the schools in the educational process but is open to co-operation and the development of social companionship in the field of education. This type of co-operation is not

58 A search on news section of the search engine yandex.ru gives c. 11,000 hits with the term "Basics of Orthodox Culture", which says something about how heated the discussion is.

in any way in opposition to the principle of the state's secular nature because this principle means that though tasks are divided between governmental bodies and religious organizations,[59] it does not prohibit their co-operation in various questions of social significance. The state and the Church share many common interests in the field of education: the aim is the integration of the pupils into the national culture and societal socialization as well as upbringing on the basis of wholesome spiritual-philosophical and ethical traditions, the creation of a Russian national identity and a cultural identity, the prevention of social abnormalities, etc.[60]

Unfortunately the principle of secularism in Russian society (continuing the Soviet legacy) is often interpreted as a dictate of atheist or anti-religious ideology. If, however, we take into consideration the experiences of the majority of European democratic nations – nations whose secular nature cannot be doubted (in Western, Central and Eastern Europe) – we can see that successfully teaching the basics of religion is entirely possible in state schools. The different approaches in different countries in teaching this topic are not considered a threat to the state or to the secular nature of the schools; on the contrary, they offer a mechanism to implement the principle of freedom of conscience by guaranteeing a plurality of approaches on world views in the educational process. Children and adolescents can thereby get an education that corresponds to the beliefs accepted in their families and the national spiritual and cultural tradition. The objective of this is expressed in the statement of the 2008 Bishops' Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church: "The participants of the Bishops' Conference find it necessary that the pupils of government schools are given the right to receive knowledge about the foundations of that religion to which they and their parents belong. This information is to be taught voluntarily. A monopoly of materialist beliefs and skepticism towards religion, which do not take into account the question of [fundamental] truths and are therefore not acceptable from a religious point of view, must not be allowed in schools." [61] The opponents who use the liberal argument that "children should themselves be able to choose their own religion

59 The Russian Federation's law "Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" states that the government "does not place the functions of government bodies, other state bodies, state institutions or local self-governental bodies to religious associations; it does not interfere with the function of religious associations unless they are against the laws of the Federation" (Paragraph 4).

60 The Russian Federation's law "Education" states that the aim of educational policies is, among other things, the following: "Educating to civic liability, industriousness, respect of human rights and freedom, love of the surrounding nature, Fatherland and family" (paragraph 2, subsection 1). The legal text also emphasizes the following: "The content of education must offer: a common and professional social culture that corresponds to the global level; the individual's integration to the national and universal culture; the formation of a person and citizen that is integrated into the culture of the times and is oriented to its development" (paragraph 14, subsection 2)

61 Document "Questions of the Inner Life and Outside Works of the Russian Orthodox Church", paragraph 21.

once they are adults," often forget that a choice can only be made for or against something which one is acquainted with. This is why the ban on learning about the foundations of one's country's religious culture is a violation of the pupil's rights in terms of his future life choices. All children will have fundamental questions about the meaning of life and the nature of religion and the answers to these questions cannot be postponed until adulthood. Religious pages left "empty" in the book of life will inevitably be filled – and unfortunately, as experience shows, esoteric or pseudo-religious cults will often be a substitute for religion.

The right to receive a religious education is an inseparable part of the freedom of conscience.[62] If teaching the basics of religious culture is forbidden, this would mean discrimination against believers in comparison to non-believers as well as maintaining the state's world view monopoly in compulsory education. The declared "neutrality of world views" actually leads to the imposition of an open or veiled "religion of secularism." If the democracy of today's Russia is not just empty rhetoric, it should take into account the diversity of social groups, including their special religious, philosophical and cultural characteristics. In demanding certain duties from the citizens, the state must for its part take care of the citizens – among other things, the spiritual development of children. That is why the parents have the legal right[63] – which is written into many international agreements signed by the Russian Federation – to choose the type of education that promotes the moulding of their world-view and gives them the opportunity to adopt their parents' and nation's traditional spiritual and moral culture. We cannot understand many historical processes or the masterpieces of Russian literature and art if they are isolated from the religious foundations and motivations that were the driving force for the persons creating them. The special role that Orthodox Christianity has in Russia is an indisputable cultural-historical fact and that is why a school teaching general knowledge should not censor the country's history but it should instead help pupils understand the role of religion in our society's life and to further the survival of the phenomenon that the Academic

62 The Russian Federation's constitution guarantees for everyone the "freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including the right to privately or together with others to profess any faith or to not profess faith as well as to freely choose, acquire and spread religious or other convictions and to act according to them" (paragraph 28). The Federation's law "Freedom of conscience and religious associations" however states: "Everyone has the right to choose religious schooling privately or with others" (paragraph 5, subsection 1)

63 For example the General Agreement on Children's Rights, signed on 20.11.1989: "The contract states … will properly take into account each people's tradition and culture in protecting and harmoniously developing children" (prologue); "The contract states are of one mind that one should strive to educate children … to respect their parents, their own civilizational identity, language and values, the child's birth country's and nation's national values and of cultures different to his own" (Part 1, paragraph 29, section C).

D.S. Lihatshov has called "the ecology of the soul – the environment created by our ancestors' culture."

The claim that this type of approach will mean that religious tensions will be on the rise should be refuted, taking into account the Russian Federation's multi-denominationalism. The special statement of Partriarch Alexei II and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church given on the 7th of November 2007 says the following on the Russian school reform: "One cannot belittle the meaning of Russia's major religions in the educational process. The experiences over several years of teaching the basics of Orthodox culture and other traditional religious cultures in different parts of Russia have given strong proof of this subject's positive effects on pupils' spiritual and moral states. Only a deep and living knowledge of one's own religion can teach the young citizen to deal favorably with people of other faiths. Furthermore, courses on the basics of Orthodox culture and other traditional Russian religions can successfully teach students, through arguments common to all religions, to deal favorably with people of other world views. At the same time we feel that modern man needs not only education in his own religious tradition but also information about other central religions. The need for this type of information can be satisfied appropriately by including topical parts into courses on social studies and history." Experience shows, that in the many areas of Russia where schools have been teaching (in some areas for over ten years) the history and culture of traditional religions that have moulded Russian society, these courses are felt to be necessary and that their positive contents in no way cause social divisions, but rather enhance its cohesion. Unfortunately on the level of the whole Federation, these positive experiences haven't been possible to replicate in all general participation schools. At the same time, the statement of the Holy Synod emphasizes the voluntary nature of the courses: "We are convinced that the courses that teach pupils their own religion should be based on a voluntary choice by the pupils themselves and their parents. At the same time we firmly believe that the best and most efficient way of ensuring the presence in schools of a spiritual-moral course and it being included in the basic syllabus is in a way that students will have the chance to choose this as an optional course."

On the basis of this approach, the concept drafted in 2007 formulates the Church's latest suggestions on the educational system for the relevant government bodies. With the on-going school reform, the Russian Orthodox Church proposes that a course titled "Orthodox Culture" be included in the new educational discipline called "Spiritual-Moral Culture," to which the non-religious, philosophical-cultural discipline that is aimed at answering the needs of Russia's non-religious population would belong. The school course on Orthodox culture would be cultural by nature and it would not be devotional. Children would attend the

classes with parental consent, and parents (and from a certain age onward, the children themselves) would have the opportunity to choose between Orthodox culture (or corresponding courses on the culture of other religions) and secular ethics. We hope that this model will in the near future be implemented throughout the Russian Federation which would mean that Russia would join the majority of European countries in how it deals with this matter.

When talking about the last two decades and the prospects of Orthodox education in Russia, one is reminded of the prophetic words of dean G. Florovsky, written in Paris in 1927: "The Church does not leave unfinished, but strengthens its heroic, educational deeds. And the Church's pedagogues cross the boundaries of virtuous pastoral care because the believer's identity has become impossible to define without clearly solving the questions of world view. The whole church, shepherds and the laypeople, is inevitably invited to join this pedagogical service… One should not give into optimistic wishes. One thing is sure: this process has started or is about to start, because it cannot but start. Of course, it will not start everywhere at once. This pedagogy is by nature like a molecule, it combusts here and there – and this is exactly where its strength lies." The different levels and shapes that the interaction and development of Christian education and upbringing will take will impact not only this field but the future of the Church and society as well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FROM A CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW

Docent Jyri Komulainen

I ON THE JUSTIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The timely character of religious education

Educational questions spark discussion. On the one hand, there is a permanent academic and philosophical interest in the matter. Educational philosophers have debated for centuries about, for example, to what extent it is justified for adults as an authority to intervene in a child's autonomy and guide him towards ends external to the development process. On the other hand, educational questions are of significance also at the grassroots level: for example, questions pertaining to upbringing and school are a staple of the opinion columns of Finnish newspapers.

Religion, too, belongs to the topics that arouse passions. Commenting in some fashion on religious education is guaranteed to spark a debate. However, according to my own observations, the quality of Finnish discourse is marred by a tendency to get entrenched behind impressions based on personal experience. This is understandable insofar as great changes have taken place in the field of Christian education during a few generations.

Only a few decades ago, school teaching and church teaching went hand in hand in Finland. The educational aims of the domestic sphere were generally speaking similar as well. In the last decade or so, however, school and church have parted ways. At the same time, domestic religious education has weakened in a context of general secularization and a pluralization of values.[64]

64 Today's parents of small children belong to a generation no longer brought up in the spirit of a common Christian culture. According to the World Values study carried out in Finland in 2005, the number of people who have received religious education decreases dramatically from generation to generation, especially in the area around the capital city: for example, 72% of all people over 65 years of age declare they have received religious education, while the percentage of 18 to 24 year-olds that have received religious education is a mere 31%. It is obvious that the amount of religious education is still on the wane: it is hardly to be expected that one who has not himself received religious education would be able to give religious education to his own children.

As it stands now, religious teaching in schools is clearly divorced from the catechism of the church in Finland. The aims of the religious teaching taking place in schools are defined from the point of view of the general educational mission of the school system. What is taught in the Finnish school, however, is "the pupil's own religion" in the spirit of positive religious freedom, a knowledge-centered introduction into one's own religion. In the upper grades, other religions and philosophies of life are introduced as well. Although a majority of Finnish schoolchildren study Evangelical-Lutheran religious teaching as a school subject, the law on religious freedom enables for all registered religious communities the prospect of their own religious teaching, on the condition that the community drafts an acceptable teaching plan. Analogous principles apply to every religion taught at schools.[65]

The aims of the curriculum support the child's spiritual development in a positive way, so no antithesis exists between church and school in principle. For example, among the central content of Evangelical-Lutheran teaching in the lower grades there is content arising from the faith of the Church, such as "God as Father and Creator, the Lord's Blessing and Jesus' teachings on the Providence of God." The textual context also points to a positive relationship between the aims of the curriculum and the pupil's spiritual development: the aforementioned content is mentioned in the curriculum under the heading *Confidence and security.*

In the curricula for other religions, the positive connections between school and religious community are even more evident. For example, according to the Orthodox curriculum, the aim of Orthodox religious teaching is "to strengthen and maintain the pupil's Orthodox identity". Orthodox religious teaching strives to transmit the church's own tradition to future generations more consciously than Evangelical-Lutheran teaching does.

From the point of view of the churches, religious education is of essential significance, regardless of whether it takes place at home, at school or in church. The French sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger has described religion as a social chain of memory stretching from one generation to the next. Secularization means the breaking of this chain, and therefore secularization is at heart a collective

65 In addition to Evangelical-Lutheran and Orthodox religious teaching, currently curricula exist for 11 different religions, although the number of students concerned is in most cases very small. Most of these are Christian, but the curricula for Islam, Buddhism and the Hare Krishna movement are also included. A special "philosophy of life" curriculum is organized for non-religious pupils.

amnesia.[66] Religious education aims at maintaining precisely this chain of memory, and is therefore crucial for the continuity of the tradition.

Religious education also has significance for the child himself, as the surrounding world sets demands for awareness of one's own background as well as a broad capital of religious knowledge. According to many estimates, Europe is at present going through a great spiritual period of transition, as a result of which new spiritualities emerge.[67] Religious traditions brought along by immigrants also pose a challenge, since they will have the effect of creating a truly multireligious Europe.[68]

The strengthened neo-atheist criticism of religion is also challenging the churches to contemplate on the significance and character of religious education. At the same time as academic studies have been analyzing the complex relationship of religion and violence, the neo-atheist literature has equated religion with fanatical violence. Religious education, too, is subjected to criticism as part of a more general criticism of religion.[69]

The strong neo-atheist rhetoric obviously attempts to force Christian educators into assuming defensive positions. However, when considering the justification of Christian education in the following, I have no desire to adopt the externally imposed role of the accused. I will rather strive to realize the New Testament ideal according to which a Christian must "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

I will commence with a short examination of the child's right to religion. I will attempt to demonstrate that no such thing as a neutral education can exist. To sum up, I will sketch a Christian education which would respect the child's human rights as well as providing him with facilities for living in a multicultural and multi-religious society. My main emphasis will be on the religious education provided at home and at church. Similar principles, with adaptations, apply to

66 See Hervieu-Léger 2000.

67 For example, the British sociologist of religion Christopher Partridge suggests that the weakening Christian culture is slowly being replaced by a "broad occulture", the religiousness of which is not organized in the way traditional religions are. Its boundaries are looser and more difficult to define. In other words, we are talking about the return of the magical form of culture. Although Western societies are still characterized by secularism, in Partridge's opinion the emergence of alternative spiritualities shows that religion is assuming new, even surprising forms in the post-modern consumerist atmosphere. See Partridge 2004, 8-118.

68 Jenkins 2007.

69 See, for example, Dawkins 2007, 318-351.

religious education in schools: although the teaching focuses on information, the aim of school teaching as well is the development of the pupil's personality.

Religious education as a child's right?

Multiculturalism is one of the central social as well as ecclesiastical challenges. During the last years there have been very different reactions to, for example, how freedom of religion and freedom of speech – experience of the holy and individual freedom of expression – relate to each other.

The tension-filled ideas about freedoms and human rights present in contemporary discourse can largely be reduced to the question of whether the rights of the individual or of society are emphasized. It is obvious that Western societies are largely built on individuals' rights. Accordingly, it has been claimed that a liberal society is incapable of recognizing the crucial significance of religious traditions in immigrants' ways of thinking. Since modern Western society interprets religion as one of the possible *choices* available to the individual, the social dimension of religions is not understood. A more favorable viewpoint toward religions might open up, however, were the multicultural society considered to consist of different communities into which individuals belong.[70] The justification of religious education, then, could be derived from the community's broader right of upholding its own traditions.

Although the social viewpoint is important, religious education cannot be based on it alone. Whenever education is under discussion, the child's rights must be placed at the center. This is also true for religious education. It is essential, therefore, to contemplate the question of principle, whether a community-provided religious education can be in balance with the child's rights – or even be included in them?

The UN declarations on children's rights are terse as far as religious education is concerned, but they seem to indicate that a child's rights include the right to balanced and normal development in the field of religion. In 1959 the UN General Assembly stated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, that a child must enjoy special protection and must be guaranteed the possibility to develop "physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity".[71]

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70 See Taylor 1994; Coward 2007.

71 See http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/25.htm (18.6.2008). The official Finnish translation does away with the obvious religious dimensions of the word 'spiritually' by translating it 'sielullisesti'.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in 1989, stipulates in article 14 that the child's right to "freedom of thought, conscience and religion" must be respected. The same article refers to the parents' right to provide "direction" for the child in a manner consistent with his evolving capabilities.[72]

In analyzing international documents, the German pedagogue of religion, Friedrich Schweitzer, has drawn attention to the fact that they do not satisfactorily articulate the right of the child to religious education. Although the right of the child to "spiritual" development is stated in unambiguous terms, it is not tied to education.[73] It can still be argued that that the expressly stated rights of the child include the right to receive religious education. How else can it be guaranteed that the child reaches the fullest possible level of "spiritual development" as mentioned in article 23 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, dealing with disabled children?

To sum up, one could say that the international documents dealing with the rights of the child also confirm the right to healthy development in the field of religion. They do not, however, explicitly refer to religious education. There is nevertheless cause to emphasize that a significant general pedagogical principle can be derived from the documents in question: the child's opinions and views must be highlighted and they must be respected. This principle must be given a place in all Christian education in order for it to respect the fundamental human rights of the child.

Pedagogical wisdom, too, states that religious education must take into account, to a sufficient extent, the child's own questions. Even if religious education aims at transmitting a communal tradition, the child cannot be treated as a vessel into which doctrine and ideals of life valued by the community are poured. What we are dealing with is more a process in which the child's own questions about life receive answers from the religious tradition of the sphere into which he is born. Just as the child learns a concrete language, by means of which he can express himself, in the same way he can compare his own existential questions to the answers given by the religious tradition available to him.

This does not mean, of course, that the child would be permanently constrained by the explanatory models offered by his environment. Neither does it mean that all religions would be, as it were, equal alternatives, something that would mean

72 See http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm (18.6.2008).

73 See http://www.ortoweb.fi/FBI/SchweitzerTartu.pdf (16.6.2008), containing the lecture held by Friedrich Schweitzerin in 26.9.2005 in Tarto "Children's Right to Religion: A Challenge to Educational Neutrality?"

the disappearance of the differences between religions and the relativization of the question of truth.[74] Freedom of religion includes the right to change one's opinion and evaluate critically the tradition into which one has grown. A critical approach in the genuine sense, however, is only possible if the child becomes thoroughly familiar with the tradition in question.

The impossibility of neutral education

Above I have tried to demonstrate positively that a child has the right to a balanced and natural development in the field of religion. But how to respond to the criticism which claims that religious education transgresses against the rights of the child? I shall put forward a few critical counter-remarks, after which I will turn to sketching an education taking place in an atmosphere of authentic Christian freedom.

Firstly, as part of the process of socialization, the community's values and beliefs relating to its worldview have always been transmitted to children. Upon closer scrutiny, a neutral education cannot even exist, since every method of upbringing always reflects some value base. If questions pertaining to religion are overlooked, the central questions of children about life are left unanswered, questions which require tools in order to handle.

Secondly, if religious education is not available or an attempt is made to reduce it to "neutral" information about religion, the secular worldview of the Enlightenment is reproduced.[75] One of the central cornerstones of the Enlightenment has been to view religion as a private matter. Often this view is closely connected with criticism of religion, which is why freedom of religion is readily interpreted negatively as freedom from religion. This threatens to lead to a conception of the common space as a religion-free zone. The result, however, would be a non-religious stance, which cannot in any way be considered 'neutral' even though it is often presented as such.

Thirdly, the categorical rejection of religious education contains the presupposition that religion has a negative effect on the wellbeing of the individual or the community. A negative pre-understanding is closely connected to the post-Enlightenment discourse on religion. To Karl Marx, for example, religion was the product of an alienated mind and for Sigmund Freud, a neurosis. Against this

74 On this theme, see further, e.g., Komulainen 2006, 181–235.
75 See D'Costa 2005.

background it must be pointed out that empirical studies concerning the relation of religion and mental health demonstrate that religious conviction correlates positively with mental health.[76]

The myth of religion in itself being harmful must be dispelled. On the contrary, in supplying a comprehensive outlook on life, most religious traditions support mental health and motivate striving for the wellbeing of the community as well. Critical thinking and creative reinterpretation of tradition have also been practiced within them, so it is of no use to perpetuate the erroneous perception of religion as blind faith in authorities.

Fourthly, what matters most is not the content but the form and intent of the education. If religious education with perseverance aims at guiding the child to an *open* interpretation of his own tradition,it is in my opinion very difficult to claim that religious education offends the rights of the child. All human thinking is inevitably tradition-bound and as such also charged with respect to worldview. The myth of "neutral" education must be dispelled. It is better that the educator publicly express the starting point of the education and within this framework strive to inculcate an outlook that is ready to encounter other worldviews as well.

Seeing religious education as inevitably offending the child's rights is revealed as a problematic stance in many ways. One could rather claim that abandoning the child to his own devices as far as religion is concerned offends his rights. The child has a right to ask questions about God, the origin of the world and the meaning of life.

76 See, e.g., Stark & Finke 2000, 1–79.

II ON THE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Father Zosima's pedagogy of freedom

Unfortunately, Christian education has at times in the past been implemented in ways which have completely overlooked the child's rights. In modern religious education, this can no longer be. In the field of philosophy of education, indoctrination has been subjected to justified criticism and its many forms have been repudiated. The concept of indoctrination refers to different opinions and beliefs being coaxed into the learner's mind without recourse to his own free judgment. If human rights and the principles of the child-centered education are to be taken seriously, all forms of indoctrination must obviously be repulsed from the field of education.

It must at once be stated that a special challenge for Christian education is posed by the fact that it is precisely religious education which is often given as an example of indoctrination or *iskostaminen* ("cementing" or "imprinting") as the concept is sometimes translated into Finnish. Since the question of indoctrination cannot be avoided when human rights and religious education are under discussion, in what follows I shall sketch out criteria for a Christian education which would be capable of avoiding the dangers of indoctrination.[77]

In my opinion, a key question in the light of the discourse on indoctrination is the following: is faith about an ideology or a dogmatic system, which should be transmitted as it is to the next generation? For example, philosopher Anthony Flew has stated concisely "no doctrines, no indoctrination".[78] Behind this comment lies the fact that indoctrination etymologically points to the imprinting of doctrine. If there is no doctrine, no imprinting of doctrine can take place either. What, then, is the role of doctrine in the Christian faith and therefore in Christian education?

It is indisputable that most churches have striven to describe their faith by means of a systematized doctrine. Those familiar with the history of theology know that already in the early Church a group of institutions developed in order to safeguard the apostolic character of the faith: among these are the Biblical canon, the office

77 On the varying dimensions of indoctrination, see Puolimatka 1997.

78 Rauno Huttunen: Habermas and the Problem of Indoctrination http://www.ffst.hr/ENCYCLOPAEDIA/indoctrination.htm (16.6.2008).

of bishop and the Creeds. The latter attempt to describe in a cognitive way what Christians believed in. The background of the Creeds is a pedagogical one insofar as they go back to the Catechisms. This is true at least in the so-called Apostles' Creed used in the Western tradition, which as far as is known has developed from a Roman baptismal creed.[79]

Is it justified, however, to draw from this historical dogmatic development the conclusion that at the center of Christian faith there exists a systematized doctrine? Is it perhaps rather the case that instead of dogmatic faith the most crucial core of the Christian faith is found in the Christian praxis, which is expounded in the liturgy and the diakonia of the Church. If so, even Christian education would not be about imprinting doctrine but expounding on church life.

In what follows, I will attempt to demonstrate that the aim of authentic Christian education is the Christian praxis, whose character is revealed to be one which respects freedom and the rights of the child. This does not mean, however, that theory does not have a significance of its own in the domain of faith as well. Dogmatics and doctrinal sentences possess their own inalienable value as an intellectual explication of faith. It is essential, however, to grasp that theirs is a limited role. My contemplations draw on the thought of the great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who has much to offer from a pedagogical perspective as well. It should be emphasized that similar lines of thought can be found more broadly in the Christian mystical tradition as well as in the narrative theology of the last decades.[80]

I suspect that most critics of Christian education misunderstand the nature of faith by equating it with an ideological system expressed in propositions. It is therefore of essential significance to make clear what the nature of the Christian faith is that Christian education aims to transmit. If Christian faith consisted of a one-sided intellectual acquiescence to certain propositions, Christian education would equal transmission of propositional knowledge and the danger of indoctrination would exist at least in principle. I do not believe, however, that most Christian educators believe this to be so. Rather they perceive themselves to be transmitting certain values of life that are considered precious by familiarizing children with holy writings and the liturgical inheritance of the Church.

If we examine, for example, the Finnish tradition of religious education, the central substance of the education of the youngest children consists of the Biblical

79 See, e.g., af Hällström & Laato & Pihkala 2005, 81–90.
80 On narrative theology see Hauerwas & Jones 1997.

narratives. The child learns about the world through narratives, so he learns about Christianity through Biblical narratives. The principle of the function of narrative is evident in an illustrative way in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* in the chapter "Of the Holy Scriptures in the Life of Father Zosima". In the passage in question, Dostoyevsky offers much important food for thought on Christian education. In the memoirs written down by Alyosha, Father Zosima recalls his early experience at church with the following words:

> My mother took me alone to mass (I don't remember where my brother was at the time) on the Monday before Easter. It was a fine day, and I remember to-day, as though I saw it now, how the incense rose from the censer and softly floated upwards and, overhead in the cupola, mingled in rising waves with the sunlight that streamed in at the little window. I was stirred by the sight, and for the first time in my life I consciously received the seed of God's word in my heart. A youth came out into the middle of the church carrying a big book, so large that at the time I fancied he could scarcely carry it. He laid it on the reading desk, opened it, and began reading, and suddenly for the first time I understood something read in the church of God. In the land of Uz, there lived a man, righteous and God-fearing…[81]

The tale of Job thus impacted on the small boy's consciousness with its own textual force. (It must be emphasized that the Holy Scripture was not "imprinted" into his consciousness but the reception of the text was produced by the text's own attractiveness.) This short passage reminds us of the fact that one of the fundamental cornerstones of Christian education is socialization.[82] The child must be integrated into liturgical life. By participating and observing the child learns and adopts the things that present themselves around him.

Father Zosima, however, is not content with remembrances, but on the basis of his own experience exhorts all servants of God's word to focus their attention especially on children, involving them in the Christian life. He gives concrete guidance on how a priest should act:

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81 See Fedor Dostojevski: *Karamamazovin veljekset*. Transl. Lea Pyykkö. Hämeenlinna:Karisto, 1988, p. 415. English quotations from Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, transl. Constance Garnett. The Lowell Press: New York, published in 2009 at http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/28054, p. 367.

82 Socialization, of course, can be distinguished from education, since socialization is not a separate, conscious activity in the same way as education. On the definitions of Christian education see e.g. Muhonen & Tirri 2008, s. 64–69.

> Let him gather round him once a week, some hour in the evening, if only the children atfirst – the fathers will hear of it and they too will begin to come.There's no need to build halls for this, let him take them into his own cottage. They won't spoil his cottage, they would only be there one hour. Let him open that book and begin reading it without grand words or superciliousness, without condescension to them, but gently and kindly, being glad that he is reading to them and that they are listening with attention, loving the words himself, only stopping from time to time to explain words that are not understood by the peasants. Don't be anxious, they will understand everything, the orthodox heart will understand all! Let him read them about Abraham and Sarah, about Isaac and Rebecca, of how Jacob went to Laban and wrestled with the Lord in his dream and said, "This place is holy" – and he will impress the devout mind of the peasant. Let him read, especially to the children, how the brothers sold Joseph, the tender boy, the dreamer and prophet, into bondage…[83]

Father Zosima continues by describing some of the central figures of the Bible, but urges people to read holy men's lives as well. The canonical text continues its life in the narratives that are influenced by the Biblical text.[84]

In Father Zosima's philosophy of education many important theological and pedagogical themes are crystallized, which open up aspects of an open Christian education that respects the child's rights. Firstly, the above cited passages demonstrate that in his pedagogic Father Zosima believes in the power of the narrative and the automatic efficacy of the holy text.[85]

If faith is understood as a gift given by God (Ephesians 2:8), it cannot be generated through human effort. Indoctrination, therefore, is excluded from the start in genuinely Christian education. True faith, according to Paul, is born in "hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ".

Another matter that attracts attention in Father Zosima's philosophy of education is the lowering of the Christian educator from his pedestal. He must put himself into the role of learner just like those being educated. Indeed, Father Zosima says:

83 *The Brothers Karamazov,* 2009, p. 370. See n.18.
84 A similar idea has been developed by D'Costa 2000.
85 The concept of the sacramental automatic efficacy (*efficacia*) of the word of God is also found in the Lutheran tradition. See Hägglund 1968, p. 306–308.

> Fathers and teachers, forgive me and don't be angry, that like a little child I've been babbling of what you know long ago, and can teach me a hundred times more skillfully. I only speak from rapture, and forgive my tears, for I love the Bible. Let him too weep, the priest of God, and be sure that the hearts of his listeners will throb in response.[86]

According to Zosima, the Christian educator owes his credibility to the fact that those being educated witness him taking the Word of God seriously and subordinating himself to it as well, in the position of a learner. In these thoughts can be found interesting parallels with the dialogical perception of education developed by Paulo Freire, one of the most significant philosophers of education of the 20th century. According to the Brazilian-born pioneer of critical pedagogic, we must abandon the "banking education" which has as a starting point the juxtaposition of teacher and learner. The educational dialogue, which aims at mutual learning, is based on love and as such cannot be realized in a relationship of domination.[87] Freire's influence is reflected in the many pedagogical views which emphasize the reciprocality and even equality of the roles of the teacher and the pupil.

Thirdly, Father Zosima's narrative method of education allows the reception of the text to be born in the listener in natural way. Christian education is a process akin to sowing:

> Only a little tiny seed is needed—drop it into the heart of the peasant and it won't die, it will live in his soul all his life, it will be hidden in the midst of his darkness and sin, like a bright spot, like a great reminder. And there's no need of much teaching or explanation, he will understand it all simply.[88]

Father Zosima's default starting point is, of course, his conviction, based on his own experience, that God's word is efficacious in itself. From this theological viewpoint follows a significant alignment of the philosophy of education, according to which explaining and teaching have no great role to play. Understanding happens by nature and its subject is the person being educated, who comprehends everything "as a matter of course". Father Zosima's philosophy of education is strongly Christian and to a very great extent one which takes place on the terms of the one being educated. The educator's role is equated with that of the sower. The

86 *The Brothers Karamazov,* 2009, p. 371. See n.18.
87 See Freire 2005, p. 75–79, 97–102.
88 *The Brothers Karamazov,* 2009, p. 371. See n.18.

Word of God being sown is attractive in its narrative form and achieves a suitable reception in the hearts of the ordinary people.[89]

Above I have examined the sixth book of *The Brothers Karamazov*, titled "The Russian Monk". Although Father Zosima's recollections can be read as separate passages, they receive further illumination from the novel's fifth book "Pro and Contra" which contains the tale of the Grand Inquisitor devised by Ivan Karamazov. Probably the most famous passage among Dostoyevsky's works is the miniature novel included in the novel, in which Christ arrives at Sevilla during the most heated period of the Inquisition's activity. Christ is incarcerated and the Grand Inquisitor, descending into the dungeon in the dark of night, delivers a long monologue to him. In it the old man rebukes Christ for having dared to bring freedom to people – a perilous freedom, of which people are incapable.

The Sevillans dominated by the Grand Inquisitor are depicted as frightened and, as it were, indoctrinated, when Christ is arrested: "so completely are the people cowed into submission and trembling obedience to him, that the crowd immediately makes way for the guards, and in the midst of deathlike silence they lay hands on Him and lead Him away". Thus the Grand Inquisitor is able to boast to Christ that "the very people who have to-day kissed Thy feet, to-morrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire [..]"[90] Can one imagine a more striking contrast to the pedagogical thought of Father Zosima, based on freedom and trust? The Grand Inquisitor, having fallen out of desire for the emperor's sword, does not serve Christ but "the wise spirit, the dread spirit of death and destruction", for he believes in authority instead of true freedom.

When we examine the broader context of *The Brothers Karamazov* as well as Dostoyevsky's oeuvre more generally, the basic essence of Christianity is depicted as a way of life that is characterized by grace and hope. Therefore Christian education likewise is an introduction into this way of life and an opening of the horizons of hope. The horizon of hope emerges beautifully in the last pages of the novel, when Alyosha holds a farewell speech to the boys at the rock, after the funeral of little Ilyushechka. The dialogue with the boys is characterized, apart from the hope of Resurrection, also by the perception of human life as a biographical narrative. In Alyosha's view, good memories are the best education:

89 On this point see Saarinen 2008, s. 23–25, in which the "model of the Sower" is emphasized more generally in Christian communication.

90 *The Brothers Karamazov,* 2009, p. 314–315. See n.18.

> You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory, especially a memory of childhood, of home. People talk to you a great deal about your education, but some good, sacred memory, preserved from childhood, is perhaps the best education. If a man carries many such memories with him into life, he is safe to the end of his days, and if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us. […] But however bad we may become – which God forbid – yet, when we recall how we buried Ilusha, how we loved him in his last days, and how we have been talking like friends all together, at this stone, the cruelest and most mocking of us – if we do become so – will not dare to laugh inwardly at having been kind and good at this moment! What's more, perhaps, that one memory may keep him from great evil and he will reflect and say, 'Yes, I was good and brave and honest then!'[91]

Alyosha realizes that he will not see the boys for decades, perhaps never again before the day of Resurrection. The memory of their common experiences, however, binds them together and can function as a reserve of moral strength at some undefined point in the future. A person's life appears as a string of beads consisting of innumerable moments and memories, in which even a single beautiful memory shines and saves many other moments. Memories are the best education, and thus Alyosha too, with his uplifting speech impresses the beautiful albeit sad moment deep into the boys' hearts. In this manner he effectively directs the boys towards the Christian life with pedagogical skill, sowing into their hearts the word of God. Intuitively, as it were, Alyosha realizes the educational philosophy of his own teacher, Father Zosima, by setting himself at the boys' side and trusting in the power of a single good memory.

In this way it can be perceived that, alongside all else in the pages of his grand novel, Dostoyevsky also gives a model for Christian education which respects – in the eyes of the modern reader – the rights of the child. Alyosha's trusting and open attitude towards the children inspires a Christian education simultaneously capable of being faithful to the example given by Jesus as well as corresponding to modern pedagogical thinking.

Above I have briefly examined Dostoyevsky's inexhaustible masterpiece *The Brothers Karamazov* from a pedagogical point of view. I have focused chiefly on the methodology of an authentic Christian education. Since educational methods need to be in balance with the content, especially as far as Christian education is

91 *The Brothers Karamazov,* 2009, p. 1004. See n.18.

concerned, I have out of necessity also touched upon the essence of the Christian faith. In what follows, however, I will raise in a more comprehensive manner the question of what the Christian narrative is like and how it could contribute to the challenges of our own time.[92]

A narrative of hospitality and openness

As I have already pointed out, the significance of Christian education is a dimension of crucial importance in the functioning of the Church: it is simply necessary for the continuity of the faith. The word 'teaching' (Greek: *didaskein*) occurs in Christ's missionary commandment, so educational work occupies a fundamental position alongside baptism in the composition of the role of the disciple (Matthew 28:17-20).

Christian education is given in many contexts. If we examine Finnish Lutheran Christianity, for example, Church education in Sunday schools and confirmation classes strives to open up the faith with which the children and the young were associated already at baptism. In contrast, religious education given at schools aims rather at a knowledge-based understanding of one's own religious tradition than its personal adoption. Although organized by the society, school religious education is not at odds with Church teaching, instead supporting it by means of an information-based deepening of knowledge in the spirit of a positive freedom of religion. In addition, the religious education given at Finnish schools opens views into other religions, something that is paid less attention to at church.

Even a more general knowledge of the different religious traditions of the world, however, is not insignificant for the Church, since one of the challenges of our time has to do with encounters between religions, as already pointed out. In the same way as the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, many European churches find themselves in a novel situation when the traditional common culture – whether it be Roman Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant – is transformed into a multi-religious one through multiculturalism. In this situation it is a good thing for Christians to have as in-depth a knowledge as possible of the worldviews which in their own way are challenging Christian faith. Knowledge of religions and familiarity with

92 There is reason to note that the theological literature I use is positioned in a multifarious historical continuum, one of the central influences of which is Dostoyevsky. As is known, he drew on the New Testament for many crucial ideas, which in turn have fertilized later theological discourse as well as existential philosophy. For this reason it is hardly surprising that many of the following thoughts can be found – at least implicitly – in Dostoyevsky's oeuvre.

them has theological significance as well, since in the context of the encounter new dimensions can be discovered in the Christian faith itself.

I shall therefore bring up two central characteristics of the basic Christian narrative, which have been rediscovered of late in the theological discourse – not least stimulated by the challenge of the encounters between religions. From these two follows a third principle which I shall briefly examine as well. All in all these points of view cast light on the kind of Christian education required when living in a multicultural and multi-religious society. Since the Christian ethos appears through these characteristics as deeply moral and responsible, an open society has reason to greet the educational work organized by the churches with joy. Religious education has broader significance for society insofar as the Christian faith acts as a resource of morality.[93] Underlining the ethical dimension of Christian education is important when reasons for religious education have to be given in public discussion. Higher ethical goals are relevant also when looking from inside the faith, since God wants his people to "seek the peace and prosperity of the city" in which they live. (Jeremiah 29:7.)

(1) The first characteristic of the Christian ethos is difficult to express with a single concept. In the Anglophone literature, for example, concepts such as 'humility' and 'vulnerability' are used.[94] It is simply a question of a non-triumphalist, non-imperialist attitude which is used to characterize both the internal relations of Christians as well as relations outside the congregation. Such an ideal if also depicted in the above quoted Father Zosima's idea on how a priest must dare to cry when addressed by the word of God and thus cause the hearts of others to tremble as well due to the encounter with the divine mystery. It is similarly reflected in Alyosha's ability to set himself at the children's side, communicating with them. It is hardly necessary to mention that the Grand Inquisitor, who chose the sword of the emperor, embodies the antithesis of such an attitude. His proud disposition appears in Dostoyevsky's description as the opposite of that of Christ, who remains silent before him.

The basis for a theology which emphasizes humility as a Christian virtue is found in the paraenesis of Paul (Philippians 2:5-11), in which the apostle exhorts the members of the congregation to adopt a disposition similar to that of Christ.

93 See, e.g., Glover 2003, 524: "One characteristic of our time is the waning of moral law. […] Those of us, who do not believe in religious moral law, should nevertheless be concerned about its waning. Everyone is familiar with the evil of religious intolerance, religious persecutions and wars, but it is striking how many protests and how much opposition to atrocities as well has been based on a religious conviction."

94 See, e.g., Bosch 1991, 485; Vanhoozer 1999, 147-148, 154.

Just as Christ surrendered his divine qualities in the mystery of incarnation and assumed the shape of a servant, thus his disciples too must give up triumphalist and imperialist modes of thought. The divine self-emptying is, as is known, referred to be means of the Greek term *kenosis*, so an appropriate Christian disposition could be characterized as 'kenotic'.

The ideal of vulnerability and self-exposition, on its part, can be traced back to the Pauline theology of the cross, in which weakness is paradoxically positioned above strength. (See, e.g., Corinthians 1:23–25, 2:2–4; 2 Corinthians 11:30). The declaration of Jesus in which all human values are radically turned upside down points in a similar direction. (See, e.g., Matthew 19:30; Luke 18:9–14). The paradoxical order of precedence of values should therefore be extended to the way in which the community of his disciples is structured. (Matthew 11:25, 20:25–28; Luke 22:25–27.)

In Lutheran tradition the significance of humility and the wisdom of vulnerability is emphasized by Martin Luther's thoughts based on the theology of the cross, according to which God conceals himself in his antithesis.[95] Christian theology cannot be a theology of glory, seeking God from the heights, since God is paradoxically to be known in the lowly and the humble. Luther drew on medieval mysticism, so the idea can be traced back through it to the earliest historical layer of Christianity – and in fact even further, all the way to the Old Testament.[96]

(2) Hospitality (Greek: *philoxenia*) is another Christian virtue which has been rediscovered in the theological discourse.In this case as well, what we have is a theme with a weighty role in both the Bible and patristic theology. The virtue of hospitality has been a central part of Christian praxis for centuries: especially spiritual orders have maintained hospitals and various kinds of shelters for strangers.[97]

The *locus classicus* of the theology of hospitality is the passage in Genesis (Genesis 18:1-15) where Abraham receives three guests near the great trees of Mamre. The text suggests that it is the Lord himself (YHWH) who thus reveals himself to Abraham. Later Christian tradition has interpreted the description of the three guests through the doctrine of the Trinity, as, for example, in the icon by

95 See Mannermaa 1995.

96 Many have been delighted and inspired in this respect by the posthumously published collection of writings of the Catholic saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus (Thérèse of Lisieux, 1873-1897) called*The Story of a Soul.*

97 See Saarinen 2008, 25-28; Koenig 2005. The latter also demonstrates the ways in which hospitality has been emphasized as a virtue in, for example, ancient Greece and the Islamic world.

Andrey Rublev depicting the Trinity.[98] The hospitality practiced by Abraham is unexpectedly rewarded with the promise that Sarah will give birth to a baby boy before the guests return in one year. Abraham's hospitality is glorified by the next chapter of the Genesis (Genesis 19:1-10) describing the evil of Sodom. The sin of the Sodomites is inhospitality, for when the same guests arrive at Lot's home the citizens want to rape them.

The hospitality displayed by Abraham at the grove of Mamre no doubt offers one source of inspiration to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when the latter gives an exhortation to show hospitality "for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2). Correspondingly, Christ suggests (Matthew 25:31-46) that acts of hospitality done to lesser brethren are actually directed at him. For those who have done so, God's kingdom is opened as a reward. It would thus seem that hospitality has an outright soteriological significance. It is indeed mentioned as a quality to be expected from the leader of the congregation, acting as an example to others. (See, e.g., 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 11:8). There is reason to recall the way in which Father Zosima urged the priest to assemble the people specially to his own home (even if it were for one hour only) in order to listen to the Biblical narrative.

The appreciation of the virtue of hospitality in the Christian tradition reflects the fact that it concretely manifests neighborly love. A stranger is in a way a moral test, since it is not natural for us humans to extend our hospitality or love to strangers. Already the many ethical instructions contained in the Old Testament demand just treatment of strangers, especially since the Israelites themselves used to live as strangers in the land of Egypt. (See, e.g., Exodus 22:20, 23:9; Deuteronomy 24:17-18). Christian education aims therefore to cultivate a personal growth which bends towards the divine ideals of humility and hospitality – as has been pointed out, by means which are genuinely in accordance with love.[99]

The Bible demonstrates in an interesting way how the basic human way of thinking is slow to give way. Examining the internal development of the Old Testament we can discern how the people of Israel slowly came to realize that God is not just the God of Israel but the God of all peoples, with his own hidden agenda. The crisis caused by the Babylonian exile had a role in this process from which ethical universalism emerged.[100]

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98 The icon is presented as well as interpreted by D'Costa 2000, 153-163.

99 A demonic perversion of education based in love is the violent way in which Bishop Edvard Vergérus treats Alexander, insisting nevertheless that he is acting in accordance with love, in the brilliant film *Fanny and Alexander* (1982) by Ingmar Bergman.

100 Neuhaus 1999, 89-99.

When we move on to the New Testament, it is fruitful to examine the process described in the Acts of the Apostles, through which the disciples of Jesus come to grasp the universal character of the gospel. The most important moment in this eventful process was the conversion of the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1-11:18), in which, acting at God's special request, Peter took the decisive step and extended his operations to a pagan man's household, thus overlooking the demands of ritual purity. Although on a superficial level the narrative is about of the conversion of Cornelius, it is just as much about the conversion of Peter to a new, more universal view.[101]

It is easy to find plenty of Biblical material for working on the theme of hospitality and crossing of boundaries – let us consider, for example, the way in which Jesus through his own actions broke prejudices against the despised Samaritans (e.g., John 4:1-42). From an exegetical viewpoint, Jesus' activity can be characterized as inclusive, so the development from a Jewish Jesus-movement to a universal church, documented by the Acts of the Apostles, is ultimately a logical continuation of Jesus' activity.[102]

When we look at the narrative at the basis of Christianity, hospitality and openness towards the stranger are found at its core. Since God, as Creator, is the Father of all, every human is revealed to be sister and brother of the others. The unique character of man is in having been created in God's image and likeness. (See Genesis 1:26-27.) From the doctrine of Creation follows the recognition of human dignity and fellowship in the stranger, so the Christian faith gives grounds for inalienable human rights. Christian education is naturally connected to interests emerging from the basis of secular ideas of human rights as well: Christian education aims at building an identity that is anti-racist, open and when necessary, socially critical as well.

(3) Thus we have already moved onto the third characteristic of the basic Christian narrative, which could be described as *potentially* critical of society. Social criticism is not an absolute value in itself, so in this sense raising it alongside humility and hospitality is to some extent problematic. On the other hand it follows from the two other characteristics: in a context where values are characterized by pride and inhospitality, taking Christian values seriously leads to antithetical juxtaposition. Jesus, after all, exhorted his disciples to be "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). At this point one might give a long list of people who, as a result

101 Bevans & Schroeder 2004, 23-25.
102 See, e.g. ,Bosch 1991, 26-31.

of their Christian conviction, have wished to change the world.[103] Many of these ultimately came to a violent end. Some of the best-known examples are Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who resisted the Nazi regime, Martin Luther King, who campaigned for the rights of the blacks and the Salvadorian bishop Oscar Romero, who spoke on behalf of the poor. What could being the salt of the earth concretely mean today? There seems to be reason to give an example which is both close enough to us and has to do with our basic theme, human rights.

One of the biggest news in 2007 in Finland was the Church becoming active in protecting asylum seekers. The Finnish Ecumenical Council published the manual *Kirkko turvapaikkana,* 'The Church as a place of refuge', at the same time as some Lutheran and Pentecostal congregations took asylum seekers threatened with expulsion under their protection.[104] The new, counter-cultural role of the churches aroused lively public debate. Some supported the actions of the Lutheran church being critical of the authorities, while others were astonished. From a theological standpoint, however, the actions of the congregations showed faithfulness to the Biblical principle according to which "we must obey God rather than human beings" (Acts 5:29). In the resulting discourse it was clearly brought out that the position of the Lutheran Church under public law in Finland has dimmed awareness of the Church's *counter-cultural* role. Such awareness has recently been revived, however, even in the Finnish ecclesiastical domain. A background factor is the influence of liberation theology, which, through the ecumenical movement, has been extended also to the northern churches.

The manual of the Finnish Ecumenical Council is characterized by a clear consciousness of the fact that offering shelter to the needy has a basis in the Bible and a long Christian tradition of hospitality. In fact, the manual's motto is a modified quote from the prayer book of Michael Agricola, the Finnish executor of the Lutheran reformation:

> My merciful Lord, give me deeds of love, so that I might labor to fulfill your desire, walk beside the suffering, give guidance to the lost, help the poor, take care of the needy, comfort the sad, encourage the depressed,

103 The ideal of activism can also be discerned in *The Brothers Karamazov.* Gibson 1973, 185-186: "By the time he wrote *The Brothers Karamazov* Dostoevsky had grasped the point which he had constantly been feeling after, and which had constantly eluded him: that Christianity is centered on action. […] In the whole career of Zosima, there stands out a searching and compelling humility which is very far from non-resistance […]".

104 Most Christian churches functioning in Finland belong to the Finnish Ecumenical Council, including the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church of Finland.

> dry the tears of the crying and forgive my enemies. In the name of your beloved son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

When we examine the international theological discussion, some theologians have been taking the theme of hospitality in a theologically innovative direction. If the ethos among the disciples of Christ was to reflect on the one hand Christ's kenotic disposition and on the other a hospitable and open stance, these ideals must undoubtedly be applied to the encounters between religions. It is fruitful in this case to ask whether God might disclose something of himself to Christians through foreign elements, through "otherness".[105] Thus Christians would not only have ethical obligations to the stranger, but also a theological obligation to open ourselves to observation of the signs God gives to us of himself in places where we would not expect to encounter them.[106] The kenotic state of mind is thus allowed to permeate the principle of hospitality to the point that a genuinely Christian disposition includes, apart from the Christian testimony, also openness to learning in the dialogue between religions.

The central principle justifying the values I have raised for discussion is *agape.* To conclude, I therefore wish to underline the central theological significance of the concept of divine love, *agape.*[107] The word contains significant conceptual force since it is on the basis of it that an approach, which is universal without being imperialist, takes shape. This is possible because *agape* is based on the same Trinitary life that has created the entire universe.[108] Since God himself is love (*agape*) (1 John 4:8), *agape* extends everywhere and encloses everyone. The Spirit of God is the spirit of freedom, so all kinds of compulsion and indoctrination are excluded when the *agape* is dominant. (2 Corinthians 3:17). Authentic Christian education can therefore take place only in a spirit which respects the rights of the child.

105 On the deeply dialogical stance of Dostoyevsky, examined above, and on the significance of "otherness" in his works, see Bahtin 1991.

106 See especially Barnes 2002.

107 We are also reminded of the centrality of this theme by the first circular letter of Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (2005).

108 See, e.g., Pannenberg 1998, 182–196.

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SIIKANIEMI 2011

COMMUNIQUÉ

on the fifteenth Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, with the title "The Church as Community. Christian Identity and Church Membership".

From September 6th to 11th, 2011, the fifteenth theological discussions took place between the delegations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church. The meeting was held in Hollola at the Siikaniemi course center of Lahti's Evangelical Lutheran parishes.

The first theological discussion meeting was held in 1970 at Sinappi in Turku, the second in 1971 in Zagorsk, the third in 1974 in Järvenpää, the fourth in 1977 in Kiev, the fifth in 1980 in Turku, the sixth in 1983 in Leningrad, the seventh in 1986 in Mikkeli, the eighth in 1989 in Pyhtitsa and Leningrad, the ninth in 1992 in Järvenpää, the tenth in 1995 in Kiev, the eleventh in 1998 in Lappeenranta, the twelfth in 2002 in Moscow, the thirteenth at Sinappi in 2005 and the fourteenth in 2008 in St. Petersburg.

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The participants of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland were the Archbishop of Turku and Finland, Kari **MÄKINEN** (head of the delegation); the Bishop of Tampere Matti **REPO**; the Bishop of Mikkeli Seppo **HÄKKINEN**; Professor Gunnar af **HÄLLSTRÖM** of the Faculty of theology Theology at Åbo Akademi; Professor Matti **KOTIRANTA** of the Faculty of Theology at the University of East Finland; Professor Antti **LAATO** of the Faculty of Theology at Åbo Akademi; Rev. Heta **HURSKAINEN**, L Th, and Pastor Marita **TUOMI.**

The Russian Orthodox Church's delegation included **ALEXANDER**, the Metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan (the leader of the delegation); **AMVROSI**, the principal of the St. Petersburg Orthodox Theological Academy, Bishop of Gatchina and the Assistant Bishop of St. Petersburg; Archimandrite **YANNUARY** (Ivliyev); Archimandrite **KIRILL** (Govorun), the vice president of the Russian Orthodox Church's education committee; Dean Vladimir **SMALIJ**, the secretary of the Synodal biblical-theological commission, vice president of post-graduate and doctoral ecumenical studies named after Saints Cyril and

Methodius; and Father Dmitri **SIZONENKO**, the theological secretary of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

Observers participating in the conference invited by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland included Bishop Aarre **KUUKAUPPI**, representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria; Professor Randar **TASMUTH** of Estonia's Evangelical Lutheran Church's theological institute as the representative of Estonia's Evangelical Lutheran Church; Father Teo **MERRAS** as the representative of the Orthodox Church of Finland; Fr. Antoine **LÉVY**, Th.D., of the Catholic Church of Finland; and Pastor Usko **KATTO** of Finland's Pentecostal Church as the representative of Finland's Ecumenical Council.

Ex officio members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland's delegation included Rev. Dr. Kimmo **Kääriäinen**, director of the church council's Department for International Relations; Dean Heikki **Jääskeläinen**, the archbishop's secretary; Rev. Dr. Tomi **Karttunen**, executive secretary for theology of the Department for International Relations, Rev. Dr. Ari **Ojell**, associate secretary for theology; and Rev. Timo **Rosqvist.**

Vladimir *Dorodnij***,** Marina *Latschinoff*, Tarja *Leppäaho*, and Ekaterina *Vlasova* worked as interpreters during the conference. Serving in the secretariat of the conference were Minna *Väliaho¸the* correspondent-secretary of the Department for International relations, as well as the stewards *Emma Mäkelä,* Bachelor of Political Science, *Marika Pulkkinen,* Master of Theology and *Heikki Repo,* Bachelor of Theology.

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The opening of the meeting was held on the 6th of September 2011. When opening the conference, the leaders of the delegations, Archbishop Kari Mäkinen and Metropolitan Alexander, paid tribute to the chairmen of the first doctrinal discussions held 41 years ago, Archbishop Martti Simojoki and Filaret, then the Bishop of Dimitrov, and currently Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk. Metropolitan Nicodim, who was instrumental in the beginning of the discussions and whose memorial service some of the conference guests attended in St. Petersburg on the 5th of September, was also remembered in the speeches.

Among other things, Archbishop Kari Mäkinen said: "Doctrinal discussions began at Sinappi in Turku in March 1970. The journey from there is geographically fairly short, just over 200 kilometers. Temporally the journey is longer, over 41 years. In this time the world has changed in many ways. Societies have changed,

culture has changed, changes have happened in churches. Fourteen times we have stopped to examine both the contemporary situation of the churches and the deep doctrinal basis of the churches. Now, when the topic of the 15th round of doctrinal discussions is the Church as community and Christian identity, we are addressing a theme that has been a driving force during the whole history of the doctrinal discussions. These have specifically been discussions between churches, the interaction of communities and not just interaction between individual learned theologians. In such processes also one's own church's historical and theological identity becomes more clear."

Metropolitan Alexander read the greeting of Hilarion, Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, the leader of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, in which, among other things, the following was said: "It is especially important for us to define our Christianity. We must ask: what is my Christian nature, where does Christ call me in these circumstances, what obligations do I have in this society that is parted from Christ? What should a Christian's ethos be like in his or her community and society? What should his or her ethical point of view be regarding questions that cause upheaval in society? What does it mean to live as a Christian? I wish you success in the work you are about to begin and I bring forth my confidence that the conference will for its part strengthen the development of the theological disciplines as well as the continuation of collaboration between our churches."

During the opening, the negotiators also remembered and gave thanks to God for Alexei II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, who passed away just after the previous conference on December 5th, 2008. As the Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod he had participated in doctrinal discussions and the last of such discussions were blessed by him.

During the conference the observers delivered the greetings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia, the Catholic Diocese of Helsinki (the Catholic Church in Finland), the Finnish Ecumenical Council and the Finnish Pentecostal Church.

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During the conference the members of the delegations and the observers delivered by turns the morning and evening prayers according to the Lutheran and Orthodox tradition.

At evensong on the 7th of September the participants of the meeting remembered the victims of the air crash at Jaroslav, Russia, earlier that day and prayed for those whom the accident had affected.

On the same day, Bishop Matti Repo, with the participants of the conference in attendance, blessed a traveler's cross erected on a cliff overlooking the water near the Siikaniemi course center. The cross bears a plaque with a quotation from Psalm 136 and the text "Doctrinal discussions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church in Siikaniemi, September 6-11, 2011."

Ambrosius, Metropolitan of Helsinki, received the delegations on the 8th of September in Lahti's Church of the Holy Trinity where the participants took part in evensong delivered by Fr. Heikki Huttunen, the Secretary General of the Finnish Ecumenical Council. The representatives of the churches greeted the congregation. Dinner was provided by the Lahti Orthodox Church.

The delegations were present on Sunday, the 11th of September at the old church of Hollola where Bishop Matti Repo gave a Lutheran mass. Amvrosi, Bishop of Gatchina, delivered the greeting of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church.

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On the 8th of September the program included a reception organized by the City of Lahti. Maija-Liisa Lindqvist, vice-chairman of the city council, received the delegates.

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The following presentations were given during the conference:

Archimandrite Yannuary (Ivliyev): God's Church as Eschatological Reality in the Letters of Apostle Paul

Prof. Antti Laato: Christ's Church, from the Shadow of Jerusalem's Temple to a Global Church

Bishop Matti Repo: The Church as Community - A Systematic-Theological Viewpoint

Dean Vladimir Smalij: Ecclesiology, a project not yet completed.

Bishop Seppo Häkkinen: The Ideal and Reality. Commitment to Membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Archimandrite Kirill (Hovorun): Christian Identity and the Membership of the Church from the Viewpoint of Practical Theology

The results of the discussions and presentations are collected into the theses presented below.

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The 15th theological discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church were once again conducted in a spirit of cordial Christian openness and mutual respect. In concluding their work the delegations gave thanks to God and gave their unanimous view that the discussions had been fruitful and had furthered mutual understanding between the churches. For these reasons, it was felt that the theological meetings ought to continue.

Hollola, September 11th, 2011

The Church as Community. Christian Identity and Church Membership.

Thesis Group I.

1) The Church was part of the plans of the triune God already before creation and it has been present through the whole history of salvation led by God as is said in the Epistle to the Ephesians 1:3,4,13: ”Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. ... And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.”

2) The Holy Trinity is the first image of the Church's existence and life. In Church the person partakes of eternal life through the grace of the Holy Spirit through God's word and holy sacraments, and he comes into the community of love which is a picture of the love that exists between the persons of the Holy Trinity.

3) The Church that was predicted in the Old Testament and founded "when the times reach their fulfillment" (Eph. 1:10) by Our Lord Jesus Christ is an eschatological community. In it the history of salvation culminates in the descent of the Holy Spirit. The central meaning of the history of salvation is the Lord's suffering servant, Our Lord Jesus Christ, depicted in the book of Isaiah, chapter 53, whose life, suffering, death, burial and resurrection are key points in the gospel on the kingdom of heaven that is to be declared to all people. The Father has sent the Son to connect all people to Him through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit that acts in the Church allows a person to partake of salvation, sanctifies him and leads him to eternal life.

4) Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit makes a person a part of God's act of salvation in Christ. Baptism joins the person to the Church as a member, into the body of Christ, and connects it with both the head and all its members. (Galatians 3:26-29)

5) The Church fellowship culminates in the sacrament of communion. In the Eucharist the members of the Church share both Christ's and their own life with all the members of his body (1 Corinthians 10: 16-17). In this sacrament the Creator and the created, heaven and earth, humans and angels, the living and previously living members of the Church are connected.

6) Since the beginning, baptism and Eucharist have been the most important sacraments in Christian thought. On them is founded the Church's unity and community (*koinonia*) that the triune God creates. "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:3-6)

7) The one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church is a historical reality that at the same time transcends the boundaries of time and space. The Church's unity and continuity are closely connected to the ministry of bishop. The question of the bishop's place and role in the Church should be taken up as a theme in the next discussions between our churches.

8) Christ's Church is universal. Its message about the death of the son of God and resurrection belongs to all humanity. It concerns their whole life comprehensively, both physically and spiritually. The Church is called to faithfully fulfill Christ's command of preaching the Gospel and serving the world. (Matthew 28:18-20)

9) Jesus declared an eschatological jubilee (Luke 4:17-19 and Isaiah 61:1-3) when God's justice is realized on earth. Christ himself gave an example to his disciples of how to serve (Mark 10:42-45 and Luke 22:25-27). For Christians this was an invitation to do social work. The first Christians sold their belongings and distributed it among the needy thus giving future generations an example of Christian love and sacrifice (Acts 2:42-47).

10) The Church is a community of mutual sharing and atonement, through whose mediation God's love is revealed to the world (Matthew 25:34-40). Christ takes man's sin, distress and suffering to bear, and Christians are also called to carry each others' burdens (Galateans 6:2). That is why the Eucharist and social work belong inextricably together. Christ gives himself utterly as a sacrifice so that his own people will give themselves as living sacrifice (Romans 12:1), and would conduct "liturgy after liturgy". Communion directs them to feed the hungry, to take care of the weak, to heal the sick and to bring hope to the hopeless. The Church also has a social dimension. The Church lives in the world, but not from the world. It should prove to the world God's goodness and love in both word and deed.

Thesis Group II

The Christian faith is a fundamental element in European culture and society. Christianity has shaped our understanding of the deepest nature of human personality. This understanding emphasizes the infinite value of human life as well as a person's freedom and responsibility. According to the Christian viewpoint, personality develops best in a society that cherishes the person's uniqueness but which also shields it from selfish individualism. Christian society reflects the life of the Holy Trinity and sets the person into a connection, *koinonia*, with God and other people. Taking part in society's life also modifies the person's real Christian identity, the strengthening of which is one of the Church's most important pastoral duties in this age.

In the ongoing process of the shaping of ecclesiastical identity, the message of the Bible, the creeds of the Early Church and the heritage of church fathers and

teachers remain unchanged. At the same time the Church cannot leave unanswered the new challenges of today's society.

One of the most important tasks of the church is moulding its members' true Christian identity on the basis of early Christian ideals. It should be the identity, based on the Gospel, of the disciples of Christ and those who follow His will (1. John 3:23) and who acknowledge Christ as Lord and God (John 20:28). In this sense, Christian identity should be by its nature Christ-centered and Eucharistic. Today, the question of ecclesiastical identity is especially important. The moral implications of the Christian identity have a special meaning in this process.

A Christian upbringing significantly affects the moulding of a Christian identity whose basis is built in homes and congregations. The church should support the educational task of homes so that the message of the church becomes the most important feature defining the members' Christian identity. The activities of the congregation should support the formation of a Christian identity. The educational goals of the public schools and the church can be compatible with those of the church (thesis II,8 of the St. Petersburg 2008 talks). Thus, the school can support the strengthening of a Christian identity.

The message and actions of the Church are essentially linked together. Where church members live according to their faith, showing Christian love in their deeds and in their attitudes to the surrounding world, the church's membership becomes strengthened and the church attracts new members.

In love motivated by faith the church life's missionary dimension becomes manifest and Christ's command is fulfilled: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35)

In Hollola on the 11th of September, 2011

WELCOMING ADDRESS TO THE 15th THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND AND THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

September 6, 2011, Siikaniemi Center, Hollola

Archbishop Kari Mäkinen

Most eminent Alexandr, Metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan, right reverend bishops, fathers, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ

The Apostle writes:

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." (Eph 4:5–6)

With these words of the apostle, I greet you and bid you welcome to Siikaniemi in Hollola. Today we shall begin the doctrinal discussions between our churches. These dialogues began in Sinappi, Turku, in March of 1970. The geographical journey from there to here is relatively short, just over 200 kilometers. Temporally it has been a longer journey, over 41 years.

During that time the world has changed in many ways. Societies have changed, culture has changed, and change has taken place inside the churches. These doctrinal dialogues have so far provided 14 stopping points over the 41 years, and this is the fifteenth. Fourteen times we have paused to examine the current situation of our churches as well as the deep doctrinal foundation on which they are based.

Thus these dialogues have formed a historic chain that could be said to represent ecumenical continuity. This continuity is a demonstration of the desire of our churches to understand and learn about the other's traditions, wealth of faith, the context in which they live, and to learn about each other's identity.

Now that the theme of the 15th theological discussions is “The Church as a community and Christian identity”, we are confronted with a theme that has been a thread weaving throughout the entire history of the discussions. These have been dialogues between churches, exchange between communities, not merely exchange between individual learned theologians. This kind of process also provides clarity on the historical and theological identity of one’s own Church.

The first theological discussions were chaired by Martti Simojoki, Bishop of Turku and Finland, and Filaret, bishop of Dimitrov, now Metropolitan of Minsk. Along the way the actors have changed. Many have served as representatives of their churches at more than one meeting, and therefore borne responsibility for carrying on this tradition. Today, we have invited former participants - veteran negotiators - from our own church to witness this opening session.

For those of us who are attending for the first time, we are not starting from scratch, but are joining a long and significant chain and will be advancing the ecumenical continuity that it represents.

The job that faces us over the next few days can increase our awareness not only of the other Church but our own as well, and our shared desire to build on the shared tradition of Church and apostolic faith. I hope that the discussions ahead will deepen our mutual understanding and encourage us in following the path of truth and love set out for us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the end of the day, the fruits of these dialogues and the life of the Church are not created by us. They are created - in the words of the apostle - by Him who “rules everything “.

Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as was in the beginning, is now and forever more, Amen.

ADDRESSED TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 15th THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND

Hilarion, Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Dear brother in Christ, deeply respected Archbishop of Turku and Finland, Kari Mäkinen!

Most eminent Alexandr, Metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan!

Dear participants!

I cordially welcome you to this significant event, the opening of the theological discussions between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland!

We have been engaged in dialogue for 40 years. Two important ecclesiastical figures played a role in its inception: Nikodim, the metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, and Archbishop Martti Simojoki. Ever since the first meeting in 1971 the content of the dialogue has been deeply theological and founded in a shared brotherhood of the gospel and love in Christ.

In the previous set of dialogues we grappled both with fundamental theological issues and the serious problems confronting society. Now we are nominally dealing with the same themes, but because of profound changes taking place in Russia, Europe and around the world, they have taken on new meaning. These changes affect theology, social opinions, cooperation between churches and the relationships between church and state and between church and society. The topic of this 15th round of dialogues, "Church as a community. Christian identity and church membership" is profoundly theological, and it also has an important pastoral and societal dimension. A few of the issues surrounding this topic were touched on in the sixth dialogues between our churches held in 1983. In the communiqué issued from that conference, the topic of which was "The Nature of the Church", it is stated "we have been joined to Christ's Church through faith

and baptism in Christ (Gal 3:26-28), who is the head of the body" (§ 2) What is significant is that the holy fathers of the era of the great ecumenical councils did not create a specific ecclesiological doctrine. A need for such a thing did not emerge until later, when the Church began to encounter the incomprehension of outsiders, and even the outright hostility of the outside world towards the Church. Under these circumstances it becomes very important to ask to what extent are we, living two thousand years after the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, truly Christians? What do we consider to be the nature of Christianity? To what extent do we maintain cohesion within the Christian community, the Church, and world-wide Christianity?

You are facing a very demanding discourse, during which you will deal with the theological concept of the Church, the reason for its existence and its elusive nature: visible reality, which manifests in the internal communities of the churches of this world, as well as the invisible, eschatological, reality, the reality of the world to come. The Christian life can only be correctly understood by examining it from the perspective of the theological teachings about the Church. The Holy Hieromartyr Hilarion (Troitsky) made the observation, "there is no Christianity without the Church": "the Church's truth above all affects the life of every Christian, it defines both his faith and his life… Faith in the Church requires struggling with both the individual's understanding and will. For this reason the Church's truth is repugnant to those aspects of life that have long and imperceptibly infiltrated even the consciousness and self-reflection of the Russian Orthodox community".

Everyone knows that there are a lot of nominal Christians in today's world. They say they belong to the Church, but they in no way demonstrate true faith in Christ. They do not consider salvation or unity with God to be the goal of the spiritual life, but regard Christianity as a traditional habit, part of their cultural and ethnic identity. These issues are particularly relevant today, in an era of increasing opposition between religious traditions and identity. This can be observed going on in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

Sometimes political, societal and national features are connected with the Christian identity. The reason for that seems to be that those who call and regard themselves as Christians try to infiltrate into the Church and society liberal ideas, show themselves under nationalistic slogans and act in the name of a political party.

Nowadays we encounter, in Europe and globally, a Christophobic attitude, concrete demonstrations of discrimination against Christians. These persecutions

happen on a grand scale for example in discussions over Christians' "erroneous" opinion about legalizing abortion or "marriage between persons of the same sex". This continues, even though officially people speak of acceptance and defending freedom of conscience. At the same time, the discrimination against representatives of other religious (national) groups is considered a crime, and they also have their own terms (anti-Semitism and Islamophobia).

In the face of these new persecutions against Christians it is especially important that we define our Christianity. We need to ask: what is my Christian essence to which Christ calls me in these circumstances, what are my obligations in this society that has become distanced from Christ? What should the Christian ethos be towards the community and society? What should one's ethical view be on the issues that are causing uproar in society? What does it mean to live as a Christian?

The solution to this problem can probably be found in shaping the true Christian identity of our churches' members. In addition, it is necessary to fit their other religious identities (cultural, national, etc.) together with Christian identity, and above all make them compatible with Christian moral values. In the words of the Apostle, the faithful should be "blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation", and they "shine like stars in the world" (Phil 2:15).

I wish you success in the mission you are about to undertake, and I express confidence that these dialogues will strengthen the development of theological disciplines and promote the continuation of cooperation between our churches.

GOD'S CHURCH AS ESCHATOLOGICAL REALITY IN APOSTLE PAUL'S LETTERS

Archimandrite Yannuary (Ivliyev)

1 Ekklesia as God's eschatological people

In the language of ancient Classical Greece, the word ekklesia referred to an assembly (both in the sense of a gathering and a ruling body). In the Septuagint this word is often used to translate the Biblical expression קְהַל יהוה (*qehal JHWH*), 'the community of the Lord's people'. The first Christians consciously employed this Old Testament term for the people of God, and the word ekklesia morphed into a technical term used to mean the eschatological people of God who believe in Jesus Christ. The word ekklesia derives from the verb ekkalein, to summon. The word was considered based on its pronunciation to be "eschatological": ekklesia is a community of people who have been "summoned", "chosen", "extracted" from this world. This eschatological people, the community of salvation, was assembled by Jesus Christ. At the core of this new eschatological community were his disciples, the future apostles. Their lives as followers of the Teacher differed significantly from the life of the surrounding community, because their guiding light was the idea that "God's kingdom is at hand" (Mark 1:15)

Jesus Christ's eschatological message (kerygma) and the experience of having lived close to the Teacher continued to influence his disciples and followers even after the events of the Passion and Resurrection. A new experience of the resurrected Christ's presence in God' Spirit gave them certainty that Jesus rising from the dead signified the beginning of the "end times". Thus the identity of the earliest Christian communities was shaped. However, the crucial thing about this was the presence of God's Spirit. The first church in Jerusalem identified itself as a community of eschatological salvation (*ekklēsia*). Its mission was to assemble God's renewed nation. Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ became the process of initiation into this community. This early church's (*ekklēsia*) awareness of itself is reflected in the story of the events of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41).

2 Ekklesia as a local community and universal church

The word *ekklēsia* can be used to mean two connected but distinct realities. This is most clearly expressed in the letters that form the *Corpus Paulinum*. The word *ekklēsia* can firstly refer to a concrete local community, a "church" [Finnish *seurakunta*, Russian *tserkov*]. This is the meaning when the word appears in the plural: "all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom 16:4), "the churches of Galatia" (1 Cor 16:1), "the churches of Asia" (1 Cor 16:19). This is precisely the meaning that the apostle Paul intends in the majority of cases. Secondly, the word *ekklēsia* can refer to the whole nation of believers. In this case it refers to the **whole** church, which is concretely manifested in the individual communities. The word *ekklēsia* could be intended in the opening salutations of the apostle's "most ecclesiological" letter: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (1 Cor 1:1-2). This is also the intended meaning when the apostle refers to his previous life, saying "I was violently persecuting the church of God" (Gal 1:13). Clearly these and similar cases refer to the universal church and not local communities.

The two ways in which the word *ekklēsia* is used – either to refer to the local or "universal" church – reflect the duality that is inherent to the eschatological people of God. On the one hand, the church is not a phenomenon of this sinful world: it belongs to another, a new era. In itself, this church is invisible. On the other hand, this invisible eschatological church materializes as the different church communities in this world. The church is therefore a two-part phenomenon of reality: it is visible as a worldly fact, but invisible (except to the eyes of faith) as an eschatological reality of times to come.

3 The proximity of eschaton and its existence in time

The church does not yet live in the new era, but in the end times of this world. These "end times" were understood by the apostle Paul – like all early Christians – to be very short: "the appointed time has grown short" (1 Cor 7:29); "now the

moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers" (Rom 13:11); "The Lord is near. (Phil 4:5). "Steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 1:3) refers to tenacity in waiting for Christ's swift return. The apostle assumes that he will still be alive when the end comes: "We will not all die" (1 Cor 15:51, see also 1 Thess 4:17).

What are the consequences of the nearness of the end? The apostle does not present apocalyptic visions of the destruction of "the present evil age" (Gal 1:4) or apocalyptic calculations about time. On the contrary, he rejects such speculation (1 Thess 5:1-11). In his view, the consequences are mostly ethical: "Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rom 13:12).

Eschatology is not divorced from the concept of time. But time is considered only as a sort of intermediary stage between Christ's resurrection and his second coming. It is this stage that is called "the end times". This period is defined solely as the time when faith makes Christians act (1 Thess 1:3), i.e., fulfill the apostolic mission of the church and proclaim the Lord's death "until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). In proclaiming the gospel of the cross and the resurrection, the church simultaneously characterizes this world as ephemeral, quickly approaching its end, eschaton. Through the church the world is offered, in addition to eschaton, telos, which is the goal given by God. This is why only in the church do people become matured in wisdom (*teleioi*) (1 Cor 2:6). The sufferings endured in this epoch "are nothing" (*ouk acia*) when compared with the coming brightness (Rom 8:18). The idea of patience and placing one's hope in Jesus (1 Thess 1:3) also derives from this.

The present is the time of the dominion of Jesus Christ through the Word of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is already present in the church. According to the apostle Paul, Christ's dominion in the present means the gradual implementation of the mission of salvation by destroying "every ruler and every authority and power": " For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Cor 15:24-28).

4 The organization and becoming organized

But how can there in practice exist a group that identifies as eschatological, not of this world? It is very unlikely that any historical, i.e., visibly existing group could lack order and organization.

The apostle Paul does not concern himself much with the problems of the church's organization. In principle, the life of the church derives order from the basic fact that Christ died for his brethren (Rom 14:15). The defining norm for the behavior and state of a church community is taking the weak into consideration and respecting the conscience of other members of the Christian community. These ethical norms mean placing limits on the eschatological freedom of the individual, to which he or she is in principle entitled (1 Cor 10:23, 8:7-13; cf Rom 14). It is not appropriate to speak of external pressures that cause the community to become organized, but the voluntary organization that is based on principles of love and respect. We do not have information about the structural organization of the congregations that existed in Paul's day. There were as of yet no defined offices for regulating the activities of the community. It is difficult to say what specific duties were assigned to the "shepherds" and "servants" (Phil 1:1) or those who "labor" or "have charge"(1 Thess 5:12). Paul mentions that some have a talent for helping others or acting as leaders (1 Cor 12:28) but the concrete duties that go with this are not defined. The services performed by "elders" ("presbyters") were still completely unknown to Paul. They emerge in the Pauline tradition only in the pastoral letters (see especially Tit 1:5).

5 The dialectic of being in the world and being set free from the world

In relation to the world, Paul finds a sort of dialectical middle way between renouncing the world on the one hand, and renewing the world in a Christian way on the other. The church is holy, and therefore separate from the world. It is, however, not holy in itself, but derives its holiness "from Christ". In practice, the church's holiness comes out above all in the liturgy; in theory, it derives from the definition of the church as "Christ's body". Because the church is holy, it is in a sense separate from the world. The church at the time of the apostle was radically different from all other religious communities and cults (with the exception of Judaism). Justice is realized in the church: it is impossible to partake of both the Lord's table and the table of demons (1 Cor 10:21). This sets the church apart from all the mystery cults of the period. But distancing from the world does not have formal characteristics. Outwardly, Christians do not live apart from the world (as did the members of the Qumran sect, for example) nor do they sever ties with their environment. They remain in the world, and this is not only because of the impracticability of cutting off all ties, but also because faith gives them freedom. Additionally, they have been instructed to spread the gospel in the world.

Because Christians deeply felt their inner freedom from the world, in the beginning they had no need for forms of external organization that would have expressed their radical separation from the world. Christians did not exclude themselves from the earthly order of the world around them, nor did they create a new "Christian" order that could have been considered "holy". The idea of creating a special, "sacral" social state was rejected. This dialectic in the attitude towards the world is described by 1 Cor 7:17-24. The apostle Paul urges all Christians to remain as they were, i.e., in the same position in society, as they were when they received God's call. In this case, perfect freedom is achieved. **No worldly position can prevent or promote faith.** A critical neutrality governs the relationship with the world, based in an eschatological world view.

6 The sanctity of the church. The church as God's temple

If the sanctity/holiness of the church (and Christians) is not defined as inherent holiness, but holiness bestowed by God, and holiness in Christ, then this must be expressed in the liturgy. The church as an eschatological community expresses itself best when gathered for the liturgy, where the Lord, Kyrios, is called and is experienced as being present (1 Cor 12:3, Phil 2:11). He expresses himself through the actions of the Spirit as different spiritual gifts (1 Cor 14). In reminding the Galatians of their participation in the life of the church, the apostle states without a doubt, that they have received the Spirit (Gal 3:2). When Christ's spirit is present God himself is present and "activates all of them in everyone" (1 Cor 12:6). This is experienced by others, not just those who are "inner" members of the Christian community. An outsider attending the liturgy confesses, affected by the speech of the church's prophet, that "God is truly among you". In recognizing before the world that **God reigns**, the church demonstrates that it is something more than a phenomenon of this world. To the world, on the other hand, **God's dominion** becomes apparent mainly through the church's confession and as a consequence in the suffering of the martyrs.

Eschatological holiness defines the internal structure and life of the church. Because the church is separated from the world, all worldly distinctions have lost their meaning: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28, cf 1 Cor 12:13). Rejecting worldly distinctions does not become a societal

program for life in the world but is eschatological at heart and limited to the eschatological church.

Compared to the outside world and "outsiders" (1 Cor 5:12-13; 1 Thess 4:12), "pagans" (1 Cor 6:1), the church distinguishes itself by being **God's temple** (1 Cor 3:16-17), the church of the holy. The faithful should be "be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation", they should shine in the world like stars in the sky (Phil 2:15). It is self-evident that Christians do not participate in the worship of pagan false gods (1 Cor 10:1-22). They must also not settle disputes in an earthly court (1 Cor 6:1-8). They should however, follow the "demands of conscience" and fulfill their duties towards authority (Rom 13:1-7). Separating from the world does not mean cutting off all ties with unbelievers (1 Cor 5:9-10; 10:27).

7 The church as Christ's body 6/30/15 7813284

The apostle best describes the universal-eschatological nature of the church in his famous metaphor of "Christ's body" (1 Cor 12:27 cf Rom 12:5). This metaphor expresses both the unity of the church and its foundation and origins, which is external to the free will and actions of individuals. The concept of the body of Christ expresses the church's otherworldly, eschatological nature. The church is not an alliance joined voluntarily by individual kindred spirits, nor is it a group of pneumatics each with their own charisma. The apostle Paul strongly resists this particular heresy that emerged in Corinth (1 Cor 12:12-30). But he does not define the church as merely a "body", i.e., an organism (this figure of speech for describing society was common in antiquity). The idea of the church as an organism, unity in pluralism, is present in the writings of the apostle: different body parts are equal precisely because they are different and only through their difference do they form a whole. But this old and rather trite idea is not Paul's main point (1 Cor 12:14-26). Of greater significance to him is that the church is "the body of **Christ**". The main point is, that all body parts are equal because they all belong to Christ, to whom all differences lose their meaning (1 Cor 12:12-13, Rom 12:5). The body of the church is not made up of members, be they biological or sociological, but it is made up of Christ himself. The concept of "the body of Christ" reflects the reality of salvation that each individual believer partakes of. In later New Testament texts the idea is developed of the church - the body of Christ - **as a pre-existing cosmic reality**.

Christ continues his salvation work through the church (his body). In using the expression "body of Christ" the apostle is trying to emphasize this unbroken connection in salvation history between Jesus Christ's **messianic** mission and the church's **mission**.

The Eucharistic concept of the body has special meaning for Paul (1 Cor 10:14-22; 11:23-26): "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor 10:16) Participation in unity (koinônia), the shared celebration of the liturgy, does not only bring out God's presence among the faithful, but it also reminds us (1 Cor. 11:24-25: anamnesis, of course in the word's biblical sense) that Christ is the founder of the church in the New Testament. All the faithful gather (1 Cor 11:26) around the communion bread and chalice to testify and proclaim (1 Cor 11:26) God's salvation work through Christ's death and resurrection until the end of this era.

8 Neutrality with respect to external social institutions

In presenting his ideas about the church using the metaphor of "Christ's body", Paul is concentrating mainly on regenerating life within the community rather than how the community impacts society around it. Within the charismatic community Christ's Spirit inspires a reassessment of values and human relationships. Paul remains more or less silent on how this internal revolution affects outsiders. The social institutions of the time (e.g., slavery) remain unchanged, even though within the church they lose their meaning. The apostle was anticipating the imminent return of Christ. It is possible that this anticipation made him encourage his readers to remain neutral with regard to their societal roles and duties (1 Cor 7:17-31). This neutrality is not social apathy but a manifestation of eschatologism – belief that God will radically change society for the better at the second coming. This is God's mission, and over-zealously seizing something that is only in God's remit would seem conceited. In any case, Paul was primarily concerned with strengthening faith rather than altering social and political relationships.

9 The apostolic mission of the church

There is one more reason to remain neutral with regard to earthly society that recurs in the apostle's letters. Paul's pastoral ideas regarding the church were formulated on the basis of his missionary calling. To him, the church is a missionary community, whose faith and life should be used to fulfill and continue the apostolic calling. Paul is not particularly interested in changing the social structure of the Greco-Roman world. His interest is in society that does not yet belong to Christ and in spreading the good news. This goal is given further impetus by the idea that he is living in the "end of days" and his missionary activities bring people closer to eschaton. "Brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in" (Rom 11:25). However, for precisely this reason the apostle is concerned with the survival of the church. He was well aware that the Christian communities he founded were very small "house churches" in individual cities, entirely lacking in political influence. All revolutionary and seditious ideas and actions would provoke an official reaction against which the churches would be powerless. It would put an end to missionary work among the gentiles.

A passage that expresses this well is 1 Cor 9:19-23. "For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings." It is clear that the apostle's missiology shapes his ecclesiology. The freedom of a faithful church in Christ will always be limited by its obligation to the mission. Therefore the apostle wants Christians to have a good influence on outsiders. He urges the Thessalonians: "to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we directed you, so that you may behave properly towards outsiders and be dependent on no one." (1 Thess 4:11-12) He urges the Galatians to do good unto all men (Gal. 6:10). To the Christians of Rome he imparts the famous instruction, "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience."

(Rom 13:3-5) Naturally, he says all this to enable the positive reception of the gospel and to promote a peaceful environment where the gospel can be preached.

10 Gradual integration into external social institutions

Paul argues that the sociology of integrating the church with society has missiological value. The goal is to not do damage to the church's testimony about the gospel and to entice outsiders and "gain" them for Christ (1 Cor 9:19-21). This tendency of Paul's was further developed in the pastoral letters which have the church adapting more into the surrounding culture than during Paul's day. The church is increasingly less separated from worldly social institutions. Church leaders come to bear greater resemblance to upstanding citizens than charismatic believers. This can readily be observed in a comparison of the catalog of attributes of a church leader in 1 Tim 3 and the description of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor 12! Slaves should respect their masters, and not just as brothers in the Lord (cf Philemon), but "Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honour, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed" (1 Tim 6:1). Women should know their place: "Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent." (1 Tim 2:11-12) (Cf Gal 3:28: "there is no longer male and female".) The church should use prayer to support worldly power: "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (1 Tim 2:1-3). Cf Rom 13:1-2: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement." Unfortunately, these words have historically been interpreted to mean that any earthly power, be it good or bad, derives "from God". History teaches us that this has often led to abuses. If we say that "power derives from God", we might as well say nothing, because **everything** derives from God, not just power. For some reason no one takes notice of the fact that the apostle did not use the preposition *apo* ("from") but *hypo* ("beneath") (according to the Critical Edition). He goes on, saying that power is merely the servant (*diakonos*) of God (Rom 13:4). He says this in the context of the population of the Roman Empire beginning to idolize power and

rulers. The apostle subtly polemicizes this pagan delusion and indicates the proper place for authority – as a servant. If those in authority are diligent in their duties and accomplish the will of God their Lord, then our own consciences persuade us to submit to it (Rom 13:5).

CHRIST'S CHURCH: FROM THE SHADOW OF THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE TO GLOBAL CHURCH

Professor Antti Laato

1 Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to consider certain key theological themes of ecclesiology using the texts of the New Testament and early teachings on the indivisible church. The methodological starting point is the Jerusalem temple as a unifying symbol of Judaism. My intention is to consider how the temple structured Jewish theology and what impact it had on Christian thinking regarding the church. It should be borne in mind that Judaism was not monolithic in Jesus' day, but splintered into different groups. The New Testament recognizes two influential groups: the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Their theological views were different for example on the issues of resurrection and the doctrine of angels. The Jewish historian Josephus also mentioned the Essenes. The community at Qumran had some kind of connection with the Essene group, but the nature of this connection is still debated. In addition to these there were also some Jewish apocalyptic groups and in Alexandria a religious movement that combined aspects of Jewish thought and Greek philosophy and whose main proponent was Philo.

The Talmud (Baba batra 4) says: "He who has not seen the Temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building." Jerusalem's urban plan was marked by the grand temple complex and the shrine at its center. It was a visible landmark of the existence of Jewish religion, and Judaism was mostly recognized from this building. In the temple the daily *sacrifices* were carried out. *Psalms* were sung there as well as praises to God and prayers. *Pilgrimages* were made to the temple. Especially at the great holidays of Passover, Sukkot, Shavuot, the city was bursting with pilgrims.

The temple's authority was based on *holy texts*. According to them, the temple was to be built in a location chosen by God, Jerusalem (Deut 12). The temple was a place for *encountering God*. The early theology emulated the typical Near Eastern idea that the god dwells in the temple (e.g., Isa 8:18). Alongside this,

however, the Name theology developed (the temple is consecrated to the Name of God, the so-called Deuteronomistic theology) as well as the theology of glory (God's glory *kābôd* fills the temple; see especially the so-called Priestly theology of the Pentateuch and Ezekiel). The Jerusalem temple became a sign of the unity of the Jewish groups, although the Qumran community did not accept the second temple. The roots of conflict stretched back to 150 BC, when the Maccabean Jonathan assumed the role of high priest. Because he did not belong to the family of Aaron or its high-priestly line Eleazar-Phineas-Zadok, he was not considered to be a legitimate priest. Not only the Qumran community but also the Pharisees were debating temple priesthood, especially the legitimacy of the highest priest. The *priesthood*, which was an essential part of the temple worship, became a divisive factor of unity. On the one hand, the Qumran community expected an *eschatological* event, as a result of which they would receive control of the temple again. The Jewish groups were theologically and politically oriented against each other. As revealed by the surviving documents, the Qumran community criticized the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and the latter two were also at theological odds with each other. The Pharisees tried (and succeeded) to get more influence amongst the people and finally over the proper officiating of cultic acts in the temple. The critical points were the passages in the Pentateuch that obligate priests to *sanctify themselves* in the proper manner and to perform the sacrifice specifically to the ordinances of God. This is described well in the Yoma-tractate of the Mishna, which includes a detailed description of the different stages where the high priest should bathe (entirely or only partially, e.g., washing the hands). In the Pharisaic tradition there were ten instances of bathing.

If the temple mainly served as a symbol of Jewish unity, then its architecture exemplified *particularism* or the visible difference between Jews and other pagan nations. A 1.5 meter high wall was built around the sanctuary, through which no stranger (i.e., gentile) could pass. Otherwise the temple area would become contaminated. There was a plaque with a warning that hung at the gates: "No stranger may pass through the wall surrounding this temple. Anyone found in violation of this shall be condemned to death." The women's forecourt was separated from the rest of the temple area. The temple building thus manifested a spiritual inequality.

The temple also has an *economic* and *political* significance. Jews were obligated to pay a temple tax. The office of high priest became politicized during the Maccabean period and the office holder wielded political power. Religion and politics were mixed, which inspired strong criticism from those Jews who took seriously the strictures of the holy texts. These Jews include the Qumran community, the Pharisees and Jesus and his disciples.

Next we shall consider how the themes italicized above influenced the Christian message and shaped the ecclesiology, which was shaped "in the shadow of the temple".

2 The church as an eschatological spiritual building

2.1 Prophetic holy texts as the foundation for the Church

The Old Testament canon was not decided on summarily by the church. Even during the Second Temple period there was a clear sense in Judaism of which texts were authoritative. The Jews divided the texts into three parts: the Torah of Moses, the prophets (the early prophets: Joshua – 2 Kings; later prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Minor prophets), and writings. This tripartite division is already apparent in Ben Sirah's Greek introduction and in Josephus. Christians adopted the holy texts of Judaism. It is easy to verify that the Old Testament texts are referred to and quoted as authoritative documents in the New Testament: "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:27); "Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled'" (Luke 24:44).

The foundation of the Christian congregation does not lie on alternative holy writings, rather it is firmly anchored on the texts that were considered to be authoritative in Judaism. In the Christian interpretation, the Old Testament texts received a different emphasis than they did in Judaism. Christians testified that the time of salvation predicted by the prophets was at hand. This changed the concept of God's plan of salvation, which was no longer directed solely at the Jewish people, but at the whole world. The focus of theology shifted from the Torah to the prophets and the predicted time of salvation, when sins are reconciled at the end of days. (Zech 3:10; Dan 9:24), and the reconciliation of sins will be carried out by the Lord's suffering servant (Isaiah 53). The foundation of the Christian church is found in the writings of the prophets (i.e., the Old Testament) as interpreted by the apostles authorized by our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 2:19–22): "you are … members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God."

The early Church Fathers rejected the heresy of Marcion, according to which the Old Testament should be detached from Christian Holy scriptures. The best picture of early Christian interpretation of the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament, can be found in the texts of Justin Martyr. He systematically presents four models of interpretation, that Christians employ when reading the Old Testament from a Christological perspective. Justin identifies four different ways in which the prophets speak the word of God and allude to the coming time of salvation (1 Apol 36). *Firstly*, the prophets predict future events. In his Apology, Justin presents numerous predictions of Jesus' life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. *Secondly*, the prophets speak in God's name, that is, they use the first person singular. Justin gives as an example Isa 66:1: "Thus says the Lord: Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting-place?" (1 Apol 37). *Thirdly*, the prophets also spoke through Christ's mouth. An example given is Isa 50:6–7, in which Christ speaks of his own suffering (1 Apol 38): "I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame." *Fourthly*, the prophets formulated their words to provide the people's response to the Lord or God the Father. An example of this is the interpretation of Psalm 22, in which the man of sorrow is mocked and some of his deriders say to him: "Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver— let him rescue the one in whom he delights!" (Ps 22:8)

Justin also weighs in on the great grammatical conundrum, the so-called prophetic perfect tense. The prophets were so confident in their spiritual visions, that they proclaimed them in the past tense (the perfect tense), even though their moment of fulfilment was in the future (1 Apol 42): "The things which he absolutely knows will take place, he predicts as if already they had taken place." Justin's vision is, of course, difficult to verify for many Old Testament texts, but the classic messianic prophecy in Num 24:17 demonstrates that the perfect tense could be used for prophecies referring to future events. The rising of the star from Jacob is expressed in Hebrew using the perfect tense. This prophecy is preceded by an introduction that clearly refers to a future rising of the star:

> I see him, but not now;
> I behold him, but not near—
> a star shall come [perf.] out of Jacob,
> and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel;

Irenaeus' work "*The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*" (*Epideiksis*) is systematically built on the aspect of faith according to which God announced his plan for salvation in the Old Testament and fulfilled it in Jesus Christ. In the second book of his work, "*Against Heresies*", Irenaeus rejects the ideas of the Gnostics and the theology of Marcion. The self-awareness of the Christian church has therefore from the very beginning relied on the Christological interpretation of the prophetic texts of the Old Testament.

2.2 The church as an eschatological community

Christian theology's roots in the Old Testament also explain why the Christian church regarded itself as an eschatological community. Many of the open-ended promises found in the Old Testament that were regarded as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, spoke of the end of time. The Messiah will arrive in the last days (Gen 49:1, 8–12): "Then Jacob called his sons, and said: 'Gather around, that I may tell you what will happen to you in days to come... 'Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness – who dares rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs has come; and the obedience of the peoples is his" [the old *crux interpretum* i.e. the Shiloh passage has been translated here according to the Septuagint]. A new covenant will be formed on the day of redemption (Jer 31:31–34): "The days *are surely coming* (LXX: *hēmerai erkhontai*), says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt – a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more."

The Holy Spirit will be poured out over all flesh at the end of time (Joel 2:28–32): "Then afterwards (LXX: *estai meta tauta*) I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in

those days, I will pour out my spirit. I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls." Sins are reconciled when the number of weeks are completed and God's anointed one is killed (Dan 9:24–27): "Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place... After the sixty-two weeks, an *anointed* one shall be cut off and shall have nothing..." In Christian theology the slaying of the "anointed one" was linked with the death of Jesus.

These kinds of Old Testament texts explain why Paul, for example, writes (1 Cor 10:11): "These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the *ends of the ages have come*." A similar self-perception is evident elsewhere in the New Testament: "The *end of all things is near*; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers" (1 Pet 4:7); "Children, it is the *last hour*! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the *last hour*" (1 John 2:18). The Book of Revelation, which deals with the end times, teaches that through Jesus' death and resurrection God's plan of salvation has been fulfilled, allowing the events of the last days to be set in motion. The slain Lamb is judged worthy to open the sealed scrolls (Rev 4–5). Previously, the divine heavenly assembly might have been attended by "our comrades' accuser" (Job 1-2; Zech 3), but *now* the devil will be cast down from heaven onto the earth and the angels will sing in praise (Rev 12:10–12): "*Now* have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that *his time is short*!"

Satan knows that the end is near and for that reason he begins to persecute Christ's church (Rev 12:17): "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus." The self-perception of the Christian church has since the very beginning included an eschatological dimension. This includes

"anxiety over the end times". Jesus mentions these (Mk 13; Mt 24; Lk 21) and the apostle Paul included in his apostolic sermons that Christians will be persecuted in Jesus' name (1 Thess 3:4): "In fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as you know."

2.3 The universal church

In chapters 40–66 of the Book of Isaiah it is prophesied that all peoples will come to know the God of Israel. In particular the message of God's suffering servant will spread across the world (Isaiah 52:14–15).

Many Old Testament passages dealing with Israel's special position and its relationship with gentile nations took on importance for Christians. Christian theology emphasized the metaphorical collapse of the wall in the temple precinct that separated the forecourt of the gentiles from the Jewish sanctuary. In the Letter to the Ephesians, the temple precinct is used as a metaphor for describing the change between God and the world brought about by Christ (Eph 2:11–22): "So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision'—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— remember that you were at that time without Christ, being *aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who *once were far off* have been *brought near* by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the *dividing wall*, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the *household* of God, built upon the *foundation* of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the *cornerstone*. In him the *whole structure* is joined together and grows into a holy *temple* in the Lord; in whom you also are *built together* spiritually into a *dwelling-place* for God."

Careful examination of the Old Testament made it possible for Christians to unearth promises especially pertaining to the gentiles and their entry into communion with God. The promise made to Abraham was one of these. Paul

interprets it to mean that in Abraham's "seed" all peoples are blessed. Firstly, the seed refers to Jesus Christ (Gal 3:15–18), but also to his offspring, in this case his spiritual offspring, the Christians (Gal 3:26–29): "for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then *you are Abraham's offspring*, heirs according to the promise."

In chapters 9-11 of the Letter to the Romans, Paul clarifies the relationship between the Christian church and Israel in the flesh. In this passage, Paul refers to Old Testament "remnant theology". A small group of Jews has faithfully received the Messiah sent by God, whereas the majority live in apostasy (Rom 9:25–29): "As indeed he says in Hosea, 'Those who were not my people I will call "my people", and her who was not beloved I will call "beloved".' [Hos 2:25] 'And in the very place where it was said to them, "You are not my people", [Hos 2:1] there they shall be called children of the living God.' And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, 'Though the number of the children of Israel were like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved; for the Lord will execute his sentence on the earth quickly and decisively.' [Isa 10:22–23] And as Isaiah predicted, 'If the Lord of hosts had not left survivors to us, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah' [Is 1:9]."

Hosea 1-3 provides the background to Paul's theology when he discusses the rejection of the Jewish people (Rom 11:15):"For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead!" The prophet Hosea receives a command from God to marry a "wife of whoredom", Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. The prophet's marriage is a metaphor for the covenant between God and Israel. Just as Hosea loves his wife, so the Lord loves Israel, who chases after false gods (Hos 3:1): "The Lord said to me again, 'Go, love a woman who has a lover and is an adulteress, just as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.'" Three children are born of the prophet's marriage, to whom the Lord orders Hosea to give metaphorical names. The first son is named Jezreel (Hos 1:3), because the Lord is punishing the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel (presumably referring to the events described in 2 Kings 9:23–29). The second child, a girl, is named Lo-Ruhama, which means "not pitied". This name describes how the Lord is rejecting his people, Israel, for its godless acts, "for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them." (Hos 1:6). The third child, another son, is named Lo-Ammi which means "not my people". This name also contains a

condemnation against the Israelites, "for you are not my people and I am not your God" (Hos 1:9).

The judgment passed by the Lord is justified in Hosea 2. The Lord rejects his wife, Israel, and disciplines it with a strong hand (Hos 2:1–13). Nevertheless, a time comes when the Lord renews his covenant with his wayward wife (Hos 2:14–23). When the reconciliation has taken place through God's grace, then Lo-Ruhama is pardoned and Lo-Ammi is once more called God's own. The end of verse Hos 2:23 can be translated in two different ways depending on whether the Hebrew words Lo-Ruhama and Lo-Ammi are understood to be referring to the prophet's children or not. If they are understood as personal names, then the translation would be as follows: "And I will have pity on Lo-Ruhama, and I will say to Lo-Ammi, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'" This is how it is interpreted in the Septuagint. If the names are translated, then the following is derived: "I will have pity on the one who is not pitied, and I will say to the one who is not my people, you are my people, and he will say, you are my God."

There are two references in the New Testament to the names Lo-Ruhama and Lo-Ammi: Rom 9:25–26 and 1 Pet 2:10. In both passages they are interpreted as references to God's choice in salvation history that includes the gentiles (1 Pet 2:10): "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." The gentiles, who were not God's people, i.e., they were "Lo-Ammi", "not my people", are, in Christ, the people of God (Rom 9:25–26). They were also not part of the covenant with God, i.e., they were "Lo-Ruhama", "not pitied". But now they are partakers of God's grace in Christ. The inclusion of the Gentiles is significant for God's plan to save his own people in the flesh, Israel, who rejected their Messiah, Jesus Christ.

In Romans 9–11, Paul explains why the Jews have become hardened. He begins by explaining the pain in his heart that so many of his Jewish brethren have rejected Jesus. He wishes that he himself were accursed for their sakes. Paul had personal experience that faith is God's gift that people cannot simply take for themselves. He was on the way to Damascus, full of hate towards the Lord Jesus, and at that moment God stopped him and as if by force led him onto the path of faith. Paul learned that the force of God's hand was like. God gives the gift of faith to whomever He chooses. He is God, who "has mercy on whomsoever He chooses, and He hardens the heart of whomsoever He chooses" (Rom 9:18). No one can resist His will (Rom 9:19).

When the Jews as a people rejected Jesus, they were in turn rejected by God. They became Lo-Ammi, "not my people". All of Israel was not rejected, however, because the remnant remains (Rom 9:6–13). Nor has Israel been permanently rejected, because God has a plan to redeem it (Rom 11:25–32). The temporary rejection of the Jews works to the gentiles' advantage, because in order to redeem his own people, God chooses the gentiles as the object of his love. God demonstrates the greatness of his love to the gentiles and in so doing inspires zeal, i.e., jealousy, in his own people, so that it might see what it has lost (Rom 11:11–14):

> So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their defeat means riches for Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people jealous, and thus save some of them.

So, according to Paul, Israel, which was the people of God, has become Lo-Ammi. The gentiles, on the other hand, who were Lo-Ammi, have become God's people. This is the only way that Israel, which has become Lo-Ammi, can once again become God's own people. Through this explanation Paul explicates the duality of Hos 1:10 and 2:23. On the one hand the passages refer to how the delinquent Israel can once more become God's people. On the other hand they refer to how God chooses the gentiles who are hostile to Him and escorts them into reconciliation with Him.

Another Old Testament text used to explain Israel's apostasy and the choosing of the gentiles is Isa 65:1–2. There are, however, problems with translating the passage, as the Hebrew can be translated in two substantially different ways. The Finnish biblical interpretation is as follows:

> I have been near but they did not seek me, I have been present but they have not asked for me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am', to this gentile nation that did not call on my name. Day by day I held out my hand to this rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices …

The Hebrew text can also be interpreted as meaning that God calls those to him who have never asked for him. The gentiles (Hebrew *gôy*) are chosen as God's own, whereas God's own people (Hebrew *'am*) are rejected. Using this interpretation the passage could be translated:

> I have approached those who did not seek me. I have allowed myself to be found, even though they have not asked for me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am', to the gentile nation (*gôy*) that did not call on my name. Day by day I held out my hand to the rebellious people (*'am*), who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices.

Interpreted in this way, Isa 65:1–2 contains the same duality as Hosea 1–3. It is God's plan to lead His own people to communion with Him by making them jealous of the alien gentiles. God chooses the gentiles and shows them His goodness, so that His own people should come to know God's love in Christ. This is how Paul interprets the text. In his view, Israel cannot hear the sound of the gospel, even though it has been proclaimed to them (Rom 10:14–21):

> But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' [Isaiah 52:7] But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' [Is 53:1] So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for 'Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.' [Ps 19:5] Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, 'I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.' [Deut 32:21] Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, 'I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.'[Is 65:1] But of Israel he says, 'All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.'[Is 65:2]"

Paul's key texts are also used by the Church Fathers as an argument for why the Jewish people can no longer appeal to their special status and reject the gospel about Jesus. Justin often quotes or refers to Isa 65:1–2 (Dial 24.3; 97.2; 114.2; 119.4; 130.3) in order to demonstrate to Tryphon that the gentiles summoned in Christ can with justification be called God's own people whereas the Jews have rejected the message of the gospel of the Messiah who suffered and died for sins. The same key Old Testament passages are used by Cyprian (Book 1 of *Testimonies*) and Irenaeus (*The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching,* 91–95).

The third Old Testament theme that is used to describe the apostasy of the Jewish people are the metaphors of the stones that appear in Isaiah and the Psalms. (Isaiah 8:12–15; 28:16; Ps 118:20–23):

Isa 8:12–15: Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what it fears, or be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. He will become a sanctuary, a stone one strikes against; for both houses of Israel he will become a *rock one stumbles over* – a trap and a snare for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.

Isa 28:16: therefore thus says the Lord God, See, I am laying in Zion a *foundation stone*, a *tested stone*, a precious *cornerstone*, a sure foundation: 'One who trusts will not panic.'

Ps 118:20–23: This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The *stone* that the builders rejected has become the chief *cornerstone*. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

Already at Qumran the Book of Isaiah was being interpreted as referring to the community of believers and the faithless members of the Jewish people, who rejected God's plan of salvation. In the New Testament these texts are referred to in three different contexts. When Jesus is brought to the temple as an infant, Simeon proclaims the following prophecy about him to his mother (Luke 2:34–35):

> Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Even though this passage does not directly mention the Stone, the reference to Isa 8:14 is clear. Later on, in the Acts of the Apostles, Luke demonstrates how Simeon's prediction began to come true for the Jews. Peter and John are summoned before the council because they testified that Jesus had risen from the dead. Peter proclaims before the council that Jesus has become a cornerstone for the Jewish people (Acts 4:8– 12):

> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. This Jesus is "the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone." There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.'

The apostle Paul combines verses Isa 28:16 and 8:14 when he writes that the Jews as a people have not received the Messiah (Rom 9:33):

> See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

1 Peter 2:4-8 compares the community of Christians to a shrine, the foundation of which is the Stone, Jesus Christ. This text combines all three Old Testament passages that refer to the cornerstone laid by God that was rejected by the builders:

> Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: 'See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' [Isaiah 28:16] To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner' [Ps 118:22], and 'A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.' [Isaiah 8:14] They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

In the letter to Peter, Christians are urged to be built as a temple, whose valuable cornerstone is Jesus Christ. The New Testament's way of connecting the Old Testament "stone" passages together may be a demonstration of an early source of Christian testimony. In the beginning of the 3rd century, Cyprian collected the "stone" passages and used them as the basis for a theological doctrine about the birth of the church. In *Testimonies* II, 16-18, Cyprian compiled a three stage argument about how Jesus Christ is the Stone:

1. In section II,16, Cyprian has gathered together all the passages in the Old Testament that he considers should be interpreted as references to Jesus as the Stone: Isa 28:16, Ps 118:21–26, Zech 3:8–9, Deut 27:8, Josh 24:26–27, Acts 4:18–12. To this he adds a number of Old Testament stories, in which the stone is a forerunner of Christ: The stone upon which Jacob rests his head overnight at Bethel (Gen 28); the stone erected by Moses when Joshua is battling against Amalek (Ex 17:8-16); the stone on which the Ark was placed (1 Sam 6); the stone David used to slay Goliath (1 Sam 17) – Goliath in this case is a precursor for Satan, who is slain by Christ; the Stone of Help set up by Samuel, Ebenezer (1 Sam 7).

2. In section II,17, Cyprian describes how Christ the Stone grows into a mountain that fills the whole world. The key text in this case is Dan 2:31–35:

> "You were looking, O king, and lo! there was a great statue. This statue was huge, its brilliance extraordinary; it was standing before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of that statue was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked on, a stone was cut out, not by human hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, were all broken in pieces and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the *stone* that struck the statue became *a great mountain and filled the whole earth*."

The passage of Daniel should according to Cyprian presumably be interpreted in the same way as the stone that fell Goliath. The Christ stone crushes the power of evil and the universal Church grows out of it.

3. In section II,18 Cyprian refers to two texts that deal with mountains, in which the people reach the Lord at Mount Zion:

Isa 2:2–4: In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and

shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Ps 24:3–6: Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Thus, by constructing a whole out of these Old Testament texts, Cyprian has joined together four theological perspectives: (1) Jesus Christ is the only redeemer and cornerstone. (2) The Christian church is built on him. (3) The Jewish people have rejected this cornerstone. (4) The cornerstone is the hope of the entire world and peoples wander to this stone that has become a mountain to receive wisdom and advice (cf., Hebr 12:22– 24).

The New Testament does not, however, lend support to the view that the Jewish people have been permanently rejected. God has a plan to save his own people. Christians are warned against boasting (Rom 11:17–24): "But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not vaunt yourselves over the branches. If you do vaunt yourselves, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. You will say, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity towards those who have fallen, but God's kindness towards you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree."

3 The Church's spiritual message

3.1 Sacrificial theology as the center of the Church's message

The sacrificial theology of the temple has influenced the words chosen for the prophecy in Isa 52:13–53:12. According to the text, the Lords suffering servant is led like a lamb to the slaughter (Isa 53:7). His death can act as an offering for sin (Isa 53:10) and save those who recognize that the servant was wounded "for our sakes". The text radically shaped Christian self-perception. The center of sacrificial theology was no longer the rites performed in the Jerusalem temple, but the message about Jesus, who had died on Golgotha "for the transgression of my people" (Is 53:8). Additionally, this message should be passed on to every nation and king (Is 52:14–15).

After Jesus' resurrection the Christian message began to spread and its central content was shaped based on Isaiah 53. Paul presents the content of the early Christian missionary sermon (1 Cor 15:1–7): "Now I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: [1] *that Christ died for our sins* in accordance with the scriptures, [2] and that *he was buried*, [3]and that *he was raised on the third day* in accordance with the scriptures, [4] and that *he appeared to Cephas*, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles." Paul goes on to state that this sermon links all the apostles and it is the foundation of faith (1 Cor 15:11): "Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe."

The four part Christian sermon presented from Paul arises from Old Testament scripture, as is evident from the repeated phrase "in accordance with the scriptures". In the background is Isa 53, the details of which have been fleshed out using other Old Testament texts. Good equivalents for each of the four parts of the Christian sermon can be found in the texts about the Lord's suffering servant.

[1] "*Christ died for our sins*": The servant's fate is to suffer and die for the sins of the people. The Greek phrase used by Paul, "for our sins" (*hyper hamartōn hēmōn*) does not appear as such in the Greek text (Septuagint) of Isaiah 53. The preposition *hyper* appears in the quotation of Isaiah 53 found in the First Epistle

of Clement (1 Clem 16:7). This demonstrates that the preposition *hyper* likely appeared in early Greek translations made directly from the Hebrew by Christians. Thus the early tradition passed on by Paul can be considered to be based on the Hebrew text of Isaiah 53. Expressions conveying that the servant suffered "for our sins" are numerous: "he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases" (4); "he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed" (5); "the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (6); "stricken for the transgression of my people" (8); "he shall bear their iniquities" (11); "he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (12).

[2] "*he was buried*": The servant is incarcerated and put in with criminals – just like Jesus between the robbers on the cross – and he was buried (8–9): "By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth." Jesus' fate would have been to lie in a mass grave with criminals, but a rich Jewish man, Joseph of Arimathea, gave up his tomb for Jesus.

[3] "*he was raised on the third day*": The "we" of Isaiah 53 asks God (according to the Hebrew text): "If you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper" (10). In the Qumran or Septuaginta readings of the text, it is often mentioned that the servant sees the light after his death. The light is often an image of life, in this case, the resurrection: "Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge" (11). The servant joins a large group after his death. This is interpreted in the Christian sermon as Jesus' place of honor after the resurrection: Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors" (12). "According to scripture", Jesus' resurrection took place on the third day. At no point in Isaiah 53 is a third day mentioned. Apparently in the early Christian tradition the fate of the servant on the third day was associated with another Old Testament text, in which the "we" anticipate a divine soteriological event (Hos 6:1–3): "Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; *on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him*. Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth." The disciples' hope died with Jesus' death on the cross, but it was revived through his resurrection.

[4] "*he appeared*": In the very beginning, it is said of the servant (Is 52:13): "See, my servant shall prosper; shall be exalted and lifted up, shall be very high." Later his sufferings are described (52:14) and his appearance to the masses (52:15): "so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate." Christians saw this as a testimony of how Jesus appeared to the multitudes after his death.

The centrality of temple sacrifices to the Christian message was replaced with the sermon of the gospel, which inspires faith in Jesus. The significance of Jesus death is given a detailed interpretation in the Letter to the Hebrews according to the laws of sacrifice in the Torah, especially as a fulfilment of the great sacrificial ritual on the Day of Atonement. Paul (Rom 3:25) calls Jesus "the throne of grace" (Hebr. *kapporet*, Greek *hilasterion*) which is the place of atonement above the Ark of the Covenant. The German equivalent chosen by Luther for his translation, *Gnadenstuhl*, derives from Hebr 4:16. Apparently already the author of Hebrews has made a conscious decision in the translating of the difficult Hebrew term *kapporet*. The basis for the alternative translations is two theological concepts connected to *kapporet*. Firstly, the Old Testament often ascribes the epithet "he who is enthroned on the cherubim" to God. (1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; Isa 37:16; Ps 80:2). The *kapporet* was made of gold and it was decorated with two cherubim. God's invisible throne was believed to sit on top of the Ark of the Covenant. The fact that the Ark moved with the Israelites meant God was present (Num 10:33–36), and its arrival at Israel's military camp meant victory in war (1 Sam 4). On the other hand, the *kapporet* was the place where the merciful God appeared on the Great Day of Atonement (Lev 16:2): "Tell your brother Aaron not to come just at any time into the sanctuary inside the curtain, in front of the ark, or he will die; for I appear above the lid of the ark [*kapporet*, throne of grace] in a cloud." Thus the *kapporet* could be called the "throne of grace". Paul writes (Rom 3:25): "whom God put forward as a mercy seat [*hilasterion*] by his blood, effective through faith." The sacrifice of Christ thus replaces the recurring temple sacrifices.

A special feature of the Christian church was the assembling and remembering of Jesus' sacrifice. Two key sacraments are related to how a Christian can partake of the sacrifice made by Jesus. These are baptism and the Eucharist.

3.2 The sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist as the foundation for the sanctifying life.

The core message of Christian baptismal theology is that it joins people together in the communion of Christ's death (Rom 6:3): "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" Through baptism people are cleansed of sin and their life is sanctified for God's use. From the baptismal formula found in the New Testament, the Didache, and in Hippolytus as well as Cyril of Jerusalem's catechetical sermons it is possible to reconstruct the catechism of the early Christian community and the baptismal ritual that followed it. Catechumens learned the basics of Christian doctrine. They learned to live a Christian life and to avoid sin (1 Cor 6:9–11; cf Gal 5:17–24): "Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers – none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Christian teaching about the new life was formulated in the doctrine of the two roads. The road of death leads to ruin, whereas Christ summons his own to the road of life (Didache 1–6; Epistle of Barnabas 18–20). Alongside the lessons, numerous exorcisms were performed in which the devil and the sinful life were renounced and commitments were made to life in union with Jesus. Fasting was an essential part of the spiritual exercises of the catechumen. Baptism was performed in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Once baptized, people could take part in the Eucharist. Baptism connected people to the unity of the church. They attained the reality of the new life in Christ. They began to be sanctified. Paul expounds on this at length (Rom 6:4–14): "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness,

but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."

By instituting the Eucharist during Passover, Jesus deliberately made it the meal of the new covenant. In the days of the Old Testament, when a covenant was formed there were sacrifices and the blood of the covenant was shed (Ex 24). The forging of the covenant was celebrated with a shared meal, and the parties of the covenant partook of the sacrifice. The Eucharist as set out by Jesus was precisely a covenant meal like this, and by repeating it, Christians recall for themselves what the covenant promises and gives them. The Acts of the Apostles describes how the first Christians regularly gathered to break bread, i.e., to celebrate the communion set by the Lord (Acts 2:42): "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." In the weekly gatherings, people partook of Jesus' sacrifice in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:26): "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

In Jesus' day, the celebration of Passover took the form of pilgrimage, and was focused on Jerusalem. It became a family-focused event only after the destruction of the temple. Although the Passover haggada was formed as the result of a long and complicated process of tradition, it gives a good picture of the theological focal points of Passover celebrations in the time of Jesus. The celebration of Passover has always been an educational moment, when the youngest in the family are taught about the spiritual meaning of the flight from Egypt (Ex 13:8). The group gathered for the holiday meal acknowledges that they would to this day be slaves in Egypt, if God had not saved their forebears. Before the songs of thanksgiving (the so-called *Hallel*, Psalms 113–118; Mk 14:26) are sung, Jewish families praise God's great deeds:

> This is why it is our duty to thank, exalt, worship, respect and praise Him, who what performed all these miracles for our fathers and us. He has led us from slavery to freedom, from worry to joy, from sorrow to celebration, from darkness to brilliant light, from forced labor to redemption. That is why we sing a new song to him: Hallelujah!

Col 1:12–14 resembles these praises sung to God during the Passover feast:

> … joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of

> darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Christians have been led from the realm of darkness into Jesus' kingdom, the kingdom of light. Jesus has redeemed their freedom – not from slavery in Egypt – but from slavery to sin.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Remembrance in the context of the Jewish Passover meal means partaking of the salvation given by God. God set the ancestors free from slavery and that means that he also set the current participants in the meal free. During the Eucharist, Christians are able to partake of the meal and communion shared by Jesus with his disciples the day before he died. Christians are able to be at the same table as Jesus and his disciples. They share the bread and the wine, Christ's body and blood, with the apostles.

4 The Church as a functioning spiritual community

4.1 Encountering God in Christ's Church

According to the Old Testament, serving God is not limited to a temple constructed by hand. This is why David's plan to build a temple in Jerusalem is initially rejected (2 Sam 7:1–7): "Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.' But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'" When Solomon eventually completes the construction of the temple (2 Sam 7:13), he reminds everyone in his prayer that the shrine is sanctified to God's name. It is not his dwelling (1 Kgs 8:27–30): "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! Have regard to your servant's prayer and his plea, O Lord my God,

heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today; that your eyes may be open night and day towards this house, the place of which you said, 'My name shall be there', that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays towards this place. Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling-place; heed and forgive."

The temple at Jerusalem was not a theological end in itself. Jesus' prediction about the temple's destruction was understood to mean that Christians should not attach their affections to any earthly structure. The Gospel of John reflects the increasing tension between Christians and Jews. Jesus reminds his followers that they are unable to partake of the protection of the temples and synagogues. In the company of the Son of Man, however, they will find the kingdom of God, as Jesus assures Nathanael (John 1:47–51): "When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'"

Jesus reminds Nathanael of Jacob's dream. Jacob slept out under the sky and experienced the presence of God and the angels. Only later was the shrine of Bethel build on the spot (Gen 28). Jesus' followers could rejoice in their connection to the Son of Man. They did not need shrines, but may well have to remain out of doors. God will serve them under an open sky just as he once did for Jacob. Thus Jesus joins in the proclamations of the Old Testament prophets Amos and Hosea who warned against approaching the Bethel shrine, where the liturgy had become distorted (Am 4:4–5; 5:4–6; Hos 4:15). The Gospel of John makes references to the Jews wishing to drive the Christians out of their liturgical communities (John 9:22; 12:42).

4.2 The unity of Christ's body

Judaism, based around the temple as an institution, had splintered into different groups. They challenged Christian theology to emphasize the unity of the church. In his high priestly prayer, Jesus asks his Father to ensure that his own people might be as one (John 17). Through the acts of Jesus and the apostles, the unity of the church became the central theology of ecclesiology. It was formulated to

describe the church as "one body of Christ" (Eph 4:1–6): "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."

The Eucharist expressed unity between the members of Christ's body (1 Cor 10:16–17): "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." The early Christian Eucharistic prayers preserved in the Didache express the same theology (Did 9–10):

> Now concerning the Thanksgiving (Eucharist), thus give thanks. First, concerning the cup: We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine of David Your servant, which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory for ever. And concerning the broken bread: We thank You, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory for ever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom; for Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever. But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving (Eucharist), but they who have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, Give not that which is holy to the dogs. [Matt 7:6] But after you are filled, thus give thanks: We thank You, holy Father, for Your holy name which You caused to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant; to You be the glory for ever. You, Master almighty, created all things for Your name's sake; You gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to You; but to us You freely gave spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Your Servant. Before all things we thank You that You are mighty; to You be the glory for ever. Remember, Lord, Your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Your love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Your kingdom which You have prepared for it; for Yours is the power and the glory for ever. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God (Son) of David! If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not so, let him repent. Maran atha. Amen.

Christ's body is a functional entity. Everyone is needed, and this is why the liturgy and Eucharist bring different people together. They all play an important part in Christ's body. As members of Christ's body, Christians should strive to attain the gifts of grace, so that they might be able to serve one another and take the gospel forward (1 Cor 12:12–31).

4.3 The Church forms a royal priesthood

The temple's existence not only divided the gentiles and the Jews, but it also divided the Jews themselves into spiritual groups of different ranks. There was the priestly rank, who were able to approach God through sacrifice and prayer. Jewish men could be sanctified to God, whereas women were, because of their monthly menstruation often in a cultically unclean state. In the Jewish prayer book, the Siddur, this spiritual inequality is evident in the "manly" prayer, in which thanks are given to God: "Thank you for not creating me a gentile, a slave or a woman."

In Christian theology, Israel's "foundation document" was brought to the fore (Ex 19:4–6): "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites." According to the First Epistle of Peter, every Christian is called to undertake priestly duties (1 Pet 2:9–10): "But you are a chosen race, a *royal priesthood*, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Paul teaches similar ideas when he writes that Christians are the descendants of Abraham through Jesus Christ. Christians have adorned themselves with Jesus in baptism, and baptism makes no distinction between gentile or Jew, slave or freeborn, man or woman (Gal 3:26–29): "…in Jesus Christ you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise."

The priestly duty of Christians is to perform sacrifice. They give up their whole bodies and lives for God's use (Rom 12:1–2): "I appeal to you therefore,

brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Performing Christian sacrifice means especially giving prayers of thanks to God and giving alms to the needy (Hebr 13:15–16): "Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

4.4 The Psalms as the Church's prayer book

The Christians assumed the Psalms for their liturgical use. The earliest reference is found already in the New Testament. Jesus gave the Christians an example when he sang the hymn of thanksgiving, i.e., the Hallel Psalms 113–118 with his apostles at the Passover meal (Mk 14:26). The Psalms were present in the Christian liturgy from the very beginning (1 Cor 14:26): "What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up." Hippolytus refers to this passage of Paul's letter and interprets it as proof for the use of the Psalms in the liturgy. According to the Book of Revelation, the persecuted Christian church will participate in the heavenly liturgy through the liturgy of the Eucharist. Many of the Psalms provide the background for the liturgical texts of Revelation. The Book of Revelation provides early evidence for the use of the Psalms in Christian worship.

Pliny the Younger sent the emperor Trajan a letter in which he discusses the liturgical process of the Christians. He mentions that the Christians "sing hymns to Christ and God alike in turns" (*carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem*). Tertullian wrote in his *Apology* that "Christian's sing to God either directly from the Holy Scriptures or spontaneously (*de proprio ingenio*)." The Holy Scriptures in this case doubtless refers to the Psalms. Egeria's account of her travels in the Holy Land describes the worship taking place in monasteries. From cockcrow until late at night the monks and nuns sing hymns, Psalms and antiphons. According to an early rite named after the Church Father Ambrosius, 150 Psalms were spread out over a two week period so that all the Psalms were sung. This gives a good picture of how the Psalms became a fixed part of Christian prayer. New dimensions were constantly being discovered in the Psalms. They were not being read or sung merely as texts of the old covenant, but at prayers that had been fulfilled by Christ.

The Psalms had crucial meaning in Christian religious life. Jerome advises Paula to begin studying Holy Scripture with the Psalms. Macrina, who was the eldest sister of Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, studied the Psalms as a young girl. In his letter to Marcellinus, Athanasius notes how the Psalms have become a part of Christian religious life. He says that they speak about Christians' feelings. Christians can pour out their hearts and different emotional states to God. The Psalms provide Christians with the right words with which to approach God. And this is why God wants to hear Christians' prayers. Athanasius also makes a connection between the prophecies of Christ and Christian worship. The Psalms demonstrate that God's Son has become flesh. Because he has lived without sin, he is an example to Christians, who in reading the same Psalms are following in their Master's footsteps. Also Gregor of Nyssa writes in his survived work *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms* about the development of spiritual life in sanctification.

The Psalms have a significant impact on Christian religious life. The many Christological interpretations of the Psalms found in the New Testament create the parameters in which Christian interpretations of the Psalms have lain. After his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples what had been prophesied about him in the Psalms. In the gospel stories Jesus refers to the Psalms and their lessons. According to the New Testament, Psalms 22, 31, and 69 are about Jesus' passion and death. Jesus is said to have quoted the opening line of Psalm 22 on the cross. Peter uses Psalm 16 to testify about Jesus' resurrection. Psalm 2 speaks of his glory after the resurrection and Psalm 110 is about his ascension. Psalm 45 is about Christ's position of glory in Heaven, which is much higher than the angels'. Christian interpretation developed early on to consider the righteous king of the Psalms to be Jesus Christ who reigns in heavenly Jerusalem, sitting at the right hand of God (Ps 110:1).

According to New Testament theology, the Christian community is linked to heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:26; Hebr 12:22–24). It became typical of Christian interpretation to see the Zion or Jerusalem of the Psalms as a reference either to Christ's heavenly city or earthly church. The Psalm's rich Zion theology influenced ecclesiology.

Water is a recurring metaphor in the Psalms. It was seen as a reference to Christian baptism. Starting with the apostolic fathers, the righteous man in Psalm 1 has been interpreted as a Christian at the baptismal waters. Sacrificial meals could be interpreted as a call to the Eucharist set by God. Christians found multiple sources for sacramental theology in the Psalms.

Many of the Psalms contain exhortations to live according to God's will. Many of the Christian guidelines in the New Testament are supported by the Psalms. For example, the themes of the Lord's Prayer can be found in Psalm 145. Psalm 37 contains many similarities with Jesus' teachings on the blessed (Matt 5:1–11).

5 The Church's social mission

5.1 Helping the poor

The exceptional zeal amongst Christians for helping the poor created a new social security structure in the ancient world. Behind this zeal were the Old Testament texts that spoke about social justice (Lev 25; Deut 15). The jubilee was seen as an eschatological wish, that would one day be realized in the world. The jubilee in Isaiah 61 ("the acceptable year of the Lord") is an image of the salvation brought about by God. The people who have received the Lord's Spirit are sent to proclaim the good news to the meek, to cure the sick, to release the imprisoned and to care for the needy.

In the Jewish tradition of Jesus' day, Isaiah 61 was interpreted in a messianic light. According to the Melchizedek text at Qumran (11QMelk) the judge of the end times, Melchizedek, is preceded by the anointed one. He will proclaim the good news, that the jubilee is approaching (Isa 61:2). The one who proclaims the good news is the anointed one from the book of Daniel (Dan 9:25) and the proclaimer of good news in the book of Isaiah (Is 52:7). Another Qumran text (4Q521) speaks of a time when "the heavens and the earth were obedient to his messiah" and when God's own people "will not turn away from the commands of the holy (=angels?)." The background to this is Psalm 146, which in turns bears great resemblance to Isaiah 61. The Qumran texts show that Isaiah 61 was one of the most important messianic texts regarding the end times in the Judaism of Jesus' day. The promises made in that chapter were also important to Jesus.

Jesus "first sermon" in the synagogue at Nazareth was based on the prophecy of the jubilee in Isaiah 61 (Lk 4:16–30). Jesus therefore joined in the expectation rife in Judaism that social justice will be achieved in the eschatological jubilee. The descriptions of the blessed in the Sermon on the Plain in Luke and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew follow the outline of the predictions in Isaiah 61 (Mt 5:1–11; Lk 6:20–26). Jesus answers the question of John the Baptist's followers "who is Jesus?" by referring to Isaiah 61 (Mt 11:1–6; Lk 7:18–23). Jesus'

declaration had an important social dimension, which rises above the message of the eschatological jubilee which will overturn the structures of political life. According to Jesus, the poor should be helped. The rich youth is taught the last great commandment; by following it he will be fulfilling God's kingdom on earth (Mk 10:21): "Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.'" Many of Jesus' parables have to do with the dawning of the new age, where social equality and justice are achieved. For example, invitation to the celebrations in the kingdom of Heaven are not given out based on honour and wealth, but those of lesser fortune are gathered from the side of the road to attend the celebratory feast. The prodigal son can return in the Lord's acceptable year and the older brother cannot prevent him (Lk 15:11–32). The workers in the vineyard receive the same pay regardless of who has worked there the longest (Mt 20:1–16). Jesus' reasoning "the last shall come first" and "the first shall be last" presages that justice shall be achieved in the world. No one can greedily snatch a larger part of God's kingdom for themselves.

The implementation of social justice comes across especially strongly in the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. The first Christians followed the law of Deuteronomy 15, according to which all of society's needy should be cared for. Many in the early church sold their possessions to be able to accomplish what Jesus had spoken about. The eschatological jubilee is at hand and the kingdom of God can already by fulfilled in the Christian church. The most important thing is not the benefit for the individual, but the community.

5.2 Church and politics

It is well known that Jesus' first followers were not politically active. They did not strive to change the political system, but to spread the gospel of God and the message of love to everyone. After all, this was Paul's general instruction for Christians (Rom 12:17–21): "Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." In the next chapter, Paul urges Christians to respect authority and to submit to its power (Rom 13). This does not of course mean absolute obedience; after all the powers that be may

be pursuing anti-Christian values and persecute the Christian church. The Book of Revelation sheds light on this perspective.

An important event for the Christian church took place during the reign of Constantine, when the Christian faith received state protection. Eusebios was a Church Father, who was active in the early 4th century. Christians were brutally persecuted during Diocletian, but suddenly a new leaf was turned over. Christianity became a legal religion in Rome thanks the Constantine's influence. Churches began to be constructed using state funds. Pagan religions experience serious set-backs and gradually they disappeared from society.

Some of Eusebios' oeuvre from the period of Diocletian's persecutions have survived. These were the last great persecutions experienced by the church. His most important works, however, post-date Constantine's rise to power, when the Christian faith began to achieve widespread popularity. That was when the darkness of the pagan world began to be driven away by the emperor's authority – or so it seemed. Eusebios' interpretation of the Bible gives us two different perspectives. During the persecutions, Eusebios wrote a commentary on the vision of peace in Isaiah (2:2–4), which has been quoted above. According to Eusebios' interpretation, Jesus was born during the pax Romana, when Augustus ruled the empire and there were no wars. According to Eusebios , the text in Isaiah is eschatological. The Christian church has come to the mountain of heavenly Zion, as is taught in Hebr 12:22–24:

> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

The heavenly Jerusalem will descend once more to earth, as is said in the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation. Then the vision of the river of nations flowing into Jerusalem will be literally fulfilled. Eusebios experienced first-hand a remarkable transition. Only a few years after the persecutions of Diocletian, in 312, Constantine issued an edict according to which Christianity became a legal religion. A commentary on the Book of Isaiah written after this transition contains an interpretation with a different emphasis. Now Eusebios sees the text as being fulfilled "before our very eyes". The Book of Isaiah contains numerous texts in which the arrival of the gentiles in Jerusalem is a sign of a new era instituted by

God. The Christian church will now, like Israel, become a kingdom led by the Lord, where God's will is fulfilled.

Eusebios' works pose a serious question to the Christian church about how it interprets the Bible and understands its own position relative to the imperial authority. Apparently, the persecuted church can receive the blessing of the state authority, but also the church that is protected by the state can also become a target for persecution.

ECCLESIOLOGY: THE UNFINISHED PROJECT

Professor Vladimir Smalij

There is no such thing as a "divinely revealed" ecclesiology. There is the church itself and the rich experience of life through the church. And there is an ecclesiology, produced by human reason although confirmed by grace, an attempt to describe the Mystery of the Church by rational means.

These theological actions and efforts to systematically describe the nature and mission of the church are very important and deserve appreciation. But they should not be over-emphasized, because danger might lurk in doing so.

Theologians usually present ecclesiological conflict as a conflict between different traditions, and attempts to achieve ecclesiological convergence are dismissed as an unviable approach.

The history of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation serves as an example of how polemical ecclesiological definitions, based on arbitrarily highlighting different aspects of the same reality, could exacerbate existing differences and even provoke the parties into drifting further apart.

And vice versa, when the most professional ecumenical theologians of our day can achieve all manner of consensus and compromise but if they have no relationship to the real life of the Church, then the work is meaningless.

I feel that in this day and age we are in a situation where it is not correct to speak of the shaping of a unified, systematically developed ecclesiology. Instead we should be speaking about how different ecclesiological models that were formed in different historical, cultural and philosophical contexts can exist simultaneously. They articulate different aspects of the Church's existence and its experience and they use different "hermeneutical optics", different epistemological programs and methodological principles.

The concurrent existence of multiple ecclesiologies is peaceful, civilized, dialogous, and mutually enriching.

In the Roman Catholic Church the ecclesiological doctrine has been dogmatized. I am referring to the dogmatic constitution about the church in the council of

Vatican II. And now we can speak only about the "hermeneutics" of the decisions of the 2nd council and not their, shall we say, reassessment. In Orthodoxy, on the other hand, there is no dogma regarding the Church, to the disappointment of many. In this situation there is a lot of room for creating ecclesiological structures.

In my presentation I will briefly lay out the developments of Orthodox ecclesiology over the past 150 years.

Biblical images of the Church

The Bible contains numerous images of the church. We shall look at three of them that are most frequently used to systematically describe the life of the church.[109]

God's people

The church is a nation comprising God's chosen people. Ancient Israel was God's chosen people: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31:33; Isaiah 37:27). God leads his people to salvation: "In your steadfast love you led the people whom you redeemed; you guided them by your strength to your holy abode." (Exodus 15:13, 16)The Church is the new Israel which encompasses both Jews and gentiles, it is "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" "God's own people", a community of prophets (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Paul the apostle wrote to the Thessalonians: "But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess 2:13-14, see also 1 Thess 1:4)

A special kind of holiness is expected of God's people. God always wished to see Israel as holy or sanctified. The church is Christ's bride, so it must also be holy: "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the

109 In this section I am referring to Part 2 of Document 198 by the "*Faith & Order*" commission and the chapter "Images of the Church" from M. Eriksson's book *Hristianskoe bogoslovie* [Christian Theology], St Petersburg 1999.

church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish." (Eph 5:25–27)

Christ's body

The first aspect of this image is described in the Letter to the Ephesians: "And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." (Eph 1:22-23) The second aspect is described in the letter to the Corinthians: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Cor 12:27)

The image of Christ's body emphasizes the connection that the Church as a community of believers has with Christ. Salvation in its fullness is based on union with Christ. A Christian is "with Christ" and "in Christ", and Christ in turn is with those who believe in him. Paul the apostle writes, "To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col 1:27, see also Gal 2:20)

Christ is the head of the body (Col 1:18), and the believers are the limbs. All things have been created through him and for him (Col 1:16). He was the firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15), and "according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." (Eph 1:10) The believers who are joined to him grow through him, through the head to which they hold fast (Col 2:19). This is evocative of Christ's own description of himself as a vine and the faithful as its branches (John 15:1-11).

Because Jesus is the head of the body (Col 1:18), he leads the church: "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority" (Col 2:9-10). Christ is the Lord of the Church. He and his mission direct and guide the Church. The image of the Church as Christ's body leads to the idea of reciprocity between all the people who make up the Church.

In Chapter 12 of the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul the apostle emphasizes the interdependency of the faithful. He writes: "just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." (1 Cor 12:12) For in the one Spirit they were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and they were all made to drink of one

Spirit. (1 Cor 12:13) All the members have received different gifts. They have not been granted to satisfy personal lusts, but to contribute to the whole body (1 Cor 12:14-25)

When the body is understood in this way, it incorporates the principle of reciprocity: "But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Eph 4: 11–16)

A true sense of brotherly love must exist in the body: what affects one member affects them all. Paul the apostle writes: "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it." (1 Cor 12:26) The body must be one entity, because all the faithful are baptized in one Spirit into one body (1 Cor 12:12-13). "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." (Eph 4:4-6)

Christ's body is open to anyone who wants to join it. There are no distinctions based on nationality or social status: "there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" (Col 3:11, see also Rom 11:25-26, Gal 3:28 and Eph 2:15)

Because the Church is Christ's body she continues and develops his work. After saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18), Christ sent his disciples to proclaim the gospel, to baptize and to teach, promising to be with them always until the end of the age (Matt 28:19-20) "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these" (John 14:12).

The temple of the Holy Spirit and koinonia

People are made members of Christ's body in the Holy Spirit through faith and baptism (cf 1 Cor 12:12-13). Through the holy Eucharist their partaking of this body is renewed over and over again (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16). The Holy Spirit gives the members of this body different gifts (1 Cor 12:4, 7-11) and proclaims their unity: "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Cor 12:13)

All Christ's members have been given gifts of grace to help build this body (cf Rom 12:4-8, 1 Cor 12:4-30). The variety of these gifts and their nature enriches the life of the Church and makes it better able to respond to the call to be God's servant and an impressive mark in God's hand, which promotes the revelation of God's kingdom in this world. Therefore, even though the image of "Christ's body" clearly and primarily belongs to the church's Christological dimensions, it has at the same time a deep pneumatological framework.

The Church built on the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets is God's room, a holy temple, in which the Holy Spirit dwells and works. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the faithful grow into "a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph 2:21-22) and "a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). Filled with the Holy Spirit they witness (cf Acts 1:8), pray, love, toil and serve in the strength of the Spirit leading a life worthy of their calling and striving to use the bond of peace to maintain the unity created by the Spirit (Eph 4:1-3).

The Spirit is present in the Church at both the individual and the communal level. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple." (1 Cor 3:16-17) The apostle continues, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Cor 6:19) Elsewhere, he calls the faithful a "holy temple in the Lord…a dwelling-place for God" (Eph 2:21-22). And in that context, where Christ is metaphorically called the cornerstone of the temple, Peter speaks of the faithful as a "spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5)

When the Holy Spirit is in the Church, he gives her life. Those properties that are inherent to the Spirit's nature, which are called "the fruit of the Spirit", are also present in the Church: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). The presence of these qualities is a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit and in a sense a demonstration of the Church's authenticity.

The Holy Fathers' Witness of the Church

As we know, the Holy Fathers did not formulate a systematic ecclesiology. Dean Georges Florovski explains this as follows: "The Church Fathers did not really touch on ecclesiology… because her honorable reality was open to their spiritual

gaze. After all, things that are self-evident do not require defining. This also explains why in the earliest Christian teachings of Origen, Gregory of Nyssa or even St John of Damascus there is no separate chapter on the Church." The Holy Fathers did not rely on theory, but on a self-evident, gifted experience of the Church. To a certain extent the broader musings on the different dimensions of the Church's existence emerged during the age of the heresies, when important aspects of the Church's identity (such as unity and apostolicity) were subject to doubt. In his first epistle, Clement of Rome defines the church as the assembly of the chosen, illuminated by God through Jesus Christ (1. Clem 1, 2, 6, 46, 49, 58, 59).

In the Martyrdom of Polycarp, Christians are called a "God-loving and God-fearing race" (Martyrdom of Polycarp 3.2)

In the Epistle to Diognetus, Christians are referred to as "a new race" (Epist. ad Diognetus 1).

In Clement's second epistle, Paul's definition of the Church as Christ's body is repeated: "So therefore let us choose rather to be of the Church of life, that we may be saved. And I do not suppose ye are ignorant that the living Church is the body of Christ: for the scripture saith, God made man, male and female. The male is Christ and the female is the Church." (2 Clem 14, trans. J.B. Lightfoot)

As is stated in Clement's first epistle, the office of the bishop of the church has apostolic roots: "The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order. Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the kingdom of God should come. So preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their first fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe." (1 Clem 42, trans. J.B. Lightfoot)

"And our Apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. For this cause therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards they provided a continuance, that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration." (1 Clem 44)

Clement's second epistle discusses the state that existed before the Church: "Wherefore, brethren, if we do the will of God our Father, we shall be of the first Church, which is spiritual, which was created before the sun and the moon; but if we do not the will of the Lord, we shall be of the scripture that saith, My house was made a den of robbers. So therefore let us choose rather to be of the Church of life, that we may be saved." (2 Clem 14)

The idea of the Church existing before its foundation appears in The Shepherd of Hermas, where the Church is described as an aged woman, "created… before the beginning of time and for whom the world was created" (Sim 2.4)

This description of the Church as existing before the beginning of time as a mystical community in union with the Logos influenced Origen (Commentary on the Song of Songs, II.8) and later thinking about the unity and holiness of the patristic church. Theophilus of Antioch, in his letter to Autolycus (2.14) describes different churches thus: "And as in the sea there are islands, some of them habitable, and well-watered, and fruitful, with havens and harbors in which the storm-tossed may find refuge, so God has given to the world which is driven and tempest-tossed by sins, assemblies --we mean holy churches --in which survive the doctrines of the truth, as in the island-harbors of good anchorage; and into these run those who desire to be saved, being lovers of the truth, and wishing to escape the wrath and judgment of God. And as, again, there are other islands, rocky and without water, and barren, and infested by wild beasts, and uninhabitable, and serving only to injure navigators and the storm-tossed, on which ships are wrecked, and those driven among them perish, -- so there are doctrines of error--I mean heresies --which destroy those who approach them."

Other church apologetics describe the Church as an ideal community separated from the world.

In the letters of St Ignatius of Antioch the central roles of the Eucharist and the bishop are mentioned: "Take ye heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to [show forth] the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to [the will of] God." (To the Philadelphians, 4, trans. P. Schaff)

"See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either

by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid." (To the Smyrnaeans, 8, trans. P. Schaff)

This is the first appearance of the phrase "catholic church". One of the most serious problems confronting the Church beginning in the 4th century is the unity of the Church, which came under threat from heresies and internal schisms. Irenaeus of Lyon considered the unity of the Church to be an important part of the unity of faith. "The Church, though dispersed through our the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith… the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world." (Against Heresies I.10,1-2, trans. P. Schaff). This "rule of faith" ("regula fidei"), as Tertullian called it (On the Prescription of Heretics, 13), is inherited from the apostle and the church maintains it (ibid, 29).

Irenaeus understood the unity of the Church as the fruit of the Holy Spirit's influence in the Church: "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace." (Against Heresies III.24,1)

The same idea of the unity of the Church also appears in Clement of Alexandria's debate against the heretics:

"the true Church, that which is really ancient, is one, and that in it those who according to God's purpose are just, are enrolled. For from the very reason that God is one, and the Lord one, that which is in the highest degree honorable is lauded in consequence of its singleness, being an imitation of the one first principle. In the nature of the One, then, is associated in a joint heritage the one Church, which they strive to cut asunder into many sects. Therefore in substance

and idea, in origin, in pre-eminence, we say that the ancient and Catholic Church is alone, collecting as it does into the unity of the one faith— which results from the peculiar Testaments, or rather the one Testament in different times by the will of the one God, through one Lord— those already ordained, whom God predestinated, knowing before the foundation of the world that they would be righteous. But the pre-eminence of the Church, as the principle of union, is, in its oneness, in this surpassing all things else, and having nothing like or equal to itself." (Stromata 7.17.107)

It is most likely that that the debates with heretics and schismatics inspired the addition of four modifiers to the Credo: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

The debates with the Novatians in the mid-3rd century sparked thoughts about the nature of the Church. Novatian presented the thesis that the Church is solely comprised of the righteous, whereas the general view on the Church was that it was a community of sinners brought together in unity. The bishops of Rome, Cornelius and Stephen, maintained the opinion that the Church is the place of forgiveness of sins.

Cyprian became bishop of Carthage shortly after the end of the persecutions under Decius (250-1). During the persecutions many Christians had renounced their faith. Cyprian held the view that the Church has the right to take the renegades back into the fold if they repented, and that this power lies solely with the bishop, not the priest. According to Cyprian, the connection with the bishop is the foundation of the local Church's unity.

Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, turned to Pope Stephen to ask advice about the necessity of re-baptizing the Novatians. To him it was self-evident, that if they are not members of the Church, then the sacraments cannot be performed in their schismatic community. Pope Stephen replied in his treatise "On the Unity of the Church", in which he says, e.g., "If anyone could escape who was outside the ark of Noah, then he also may escape who shall be outside of the Church." (6). Or, even more succinctly, "there is no salvation outside the church" (salus extra ecclesiam non est) (Epist 73–60 ad Iubajan 21). Saint Cyprian can also lay claim to the famous expression: "He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother." (*Habere non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem*)(On the Unity of the Church, 6)

The truth of God's unity through the sacraments and the assurance that there is no truth outside the church, meant the following to Cyprian: "For if the Church is not with heretics, therefore, because it is one, and cannot be divided; and if

thus the Holy Spirit is not there, because He is one, and cannot be among profane persons, and those who are without; certainly also baptism, which consists in the same unity, cannot be among heretics, because it can neither be separated from the Church nor from the Holy Spirit." (Epistle 73, To Pompey, 4).

St Augustine in the 5th century returned to the issue of the Church's unity and sanctity when dealing with the Donatist movement. The Donatists said that they were the righteous of the true Church, as the main Church had sullied itself, because it accepted sinful people.

In his writings against the Donatists, Augustine develops the idea of the Church as a community of people who have been called to repent and be healed, not merely a community of the righteous. He refers to the Savior's parable of the net. The net is a metaphor for the Church, this world is the sea, and the shore represents the end of this world. As long as the net is at sea, it captures both good and bad fish (*Abecedarium*). In the Church the holy and the sinners are mixed together (*corpus permixtum*). Both chaff and wheat grow side by side in the Church, and the sins of one do not pollute another. (Epistle 93.9.36). Augustine opined that the sanctity of the Church and its sacraments depends on God, not on the members of the Church. Only God can decide whether people are holy or sinful. The sanctity of the sacraments does not depend on the sanctity of the person performing them (Against Cresconius IV 16). This view enables one to accept the performance of sacraments among schismatics. At the same time, however, Augustine assumes that the sacraments of heretics and schismatics cannot lead to salvation (On Baptism, I 9). At this point it is important to note that during the classical patristic period all the most important theoretical criteria for the institutional model of the Church were formed, which has relevance for the discussion below.

The Birth of Ecclesiology

A Institutional ecclesiology: The church as a social institution

Ecclesiology as a subset of dogmatic theology was born in the western theological tradition during the Counter-Reformation when there was vigorous debate going on between various denominations. Then opposite parties developed the need to precisely define their confessional identity.

In articles V and VII of the Augsburg Confessions the "Church" is defined as follows: "The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike… the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers…"

The Catholic Church gave its own classic definition of the church using the words of Robert Bellarmine: the Church is "the assembly of men gathered in the profession of the same Christian faith, and in the communion of the same sacraments, under the reign of legitimate pastors, and especially of the one Vicar

of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff... At the same time, the Church is as assembly of men as visible and palpable as is the assembly of the people of Rome, or the kingdom of France, or the Republic of Venice."

Cardinal A. Dulles observed that the ecclesiology that emerged from the Counter-Reformation at first followed the "institutional model".

Bellarmine strongly emphasized the institutional, hierarchical, external, visible and juridical nature of the church in his definition. The definition of the church found in the treatise by Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov), "The Longer Catechism of The Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church" (1823), is a close approximation of Bellarmine's definition: "The Church is a divinely instituted community of men, united by the orthodox faith, the law of God, the hierarchy, and the Sacraments."

B Pneumatological ecclesiology

In the last decades of the 19th century, the institutional church model, which represented the external, formal and juridical view of the church, the view of the church as a purely human society, came under severe criticism from religious philosophers and academic theologians alike.

Therefore, in his treatise "Cerkov odna" (The Church is One) (1838), Alexis Stepanovitch Khomyakov (1804-1860) states that the principles of church unity are not "external", institutional or juridical, but "internal" (the grace of the Holy Spirit, love and freedom).

He defines the church as follows: "The Church is not a group of separate individuals but the unity of God's grace that lives in those rational creatures who have given themselves up to grace."[110]

One of Khomyakov's key phrases that was widespread among Slavophiles is the nominative form of the word used to describe the special quality of the Church in the Credo: "catholicity" or "sobornost". To Khomyakov, "catholicity" did not mean external universality but a special internal quality, "unity from plurality". "The catholic Church," Khomyakov wrote, "is precisely the Church whose existence is in accordance with the whole or in accordance with the unity of the whole, it is the Church of free and perfect unanimity."[111]

The concept of sobornost took on considerable importance among the Slavophiles – it gave them a window on one of the fundamental characteristics of human nature, namely, that humans were created as beings that seek out and crave unity and relationships with other people. If the church is one [soborna= a single entity made up of many units], then it is because human nature is like that: humans were created in the image of the triune God.

Khomyakov's idea resembles the thoughts of ecclesiologist Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838); it is in harmony with them. Möhler was a Catholic priest and professor at the University of Tübingen, who proposed that, instead of regarding the church as a hierarchical and juridical society it should be seen as a living organism, brought to life by the Holy Spirit and which perpetuates the mystery of the incarnation. His treatise, "Unity of the Church", was a patristic study of the principle of Church unity. According to him, this unity was a result of the influence of the Holy Spirit. "The Church exists through a life directly and continually moved by the divine Spirit, and is maintained and continued by the loving mutual exchange of believers."[112] According to Möhler, the Spirit inspires the inner life of the Church's members through mutual unity and the interactions of the church members. While Bellarmine emphasized the Church as [Christ's] "body", Möhler emphasizes its "spirit". There is a considerable difference between Möhler's definition and Bellarmine's: "Because the Spirit fills her, the Church, the totality of believers that the Spirit forms, is the unconquerable treasure of the new life principle, ever renewing and rejuvenating herself, the uncreated

110 *Polnoe sobranoe sochinenij Aleksaja Stepanovitsha Homjakova* [the Collected Works of ASH*], vol. 2*, 3rd edition, 1864, p. 3

111 A. S. Khomyakov, *L'Église latine et le protestantisme*, p. 398.

112 Johann Adam Möhler, *Unity in the Church or The Principle of Catholicism Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries*, ed. and trans. Peter C. Erb (Washington, D.C,: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 93.

source of nourishment for all."[113] Möhler's thoughts substantially influenced the development of Catholic ecclesiology. It became an important step towards the theology of the Second Vatican Council.

C Christological Ecclesiology

Institutional ecclesiology is also criticized in 19th century Russian academic theology. For example, Professor E. P. Akvilonov of the St Petersburg Spiritual Academy wrote a dissertation on the topic titled "The Church: its scientific definitions and apostolic teaching on the body of Christ" [114], in which he relied on New Testament exegetics and the early Church Fathers to criticize defining the church as merely "a community of believers". He bases his own definition of the Church on the Christological image of the Church as "Christ's body", the metaphor used by the apostle Paul, which he conceptualizes as the theological idea of *bogotshelovetseskij organizm* (divine-human organism).

Later, Christological ecclesiology was further developed by Dean G. Florovsky. It seems that his preference for Christology is primarily a reaction against the exaggeration of pneumatological ecclesiology, and his deep roots in the tradition of the Church Fathers, where the Church's Christological aspect is thoroughly explored.

D Triadological ecclesiology

In the same circles of academic theology the concept of the triadological interpretation of the Church was developed. V.A. Troitsky (later archbishop, Holy Hieromartyr Hilarion (1886-1929)), who studied the connection between the Trinity and sobornost (catholicity), and demonstrated that the Trinity is the source and model for the Church's unity and that Church unity in turn is the source and model for all the unity that exists in the world.[115]

V. N. Lossky (1903-1958) played a crucial role in the development of 20th century Orthodox ecclesiology. He wrote an excellent treatise, "*Ocherka misticheskogo bogoslovija Vostochnoj Cerkvi*" (The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church).

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113 Ibid 84.

114 E. P. Akvilonov, *Cerkov'. Nauchnye opredelenija cerkvi i apostol'skoe uchenie o nej kak o Tele Hristovom*, Saint Petersburg 1894.

115 *Triedinstvo Bozhestva i edinstvo chelovechestva* in the work, Archbishop Hilarion (Troickij*)* Ocherki iz istorii dogmata o Cerkvi*,* Moscow 1997.

In this work, Lossky proposed a new interpretation of the Church's triadological nature. He makes use of a very specifically constructed definition of the person, according to which the person cannot be described solely by its natural content. Based on this, he proposes a new interpretation of the Church's triadological nature, according to which the essence of the Church is a synthesis of its Christological and pneumatological life. Lossky's ecclesiology is an attempt to strike a theological balance between the institutional and charismatic aspects of the Church.

According to Lossky, the Church is made up of two "construction sites": Christ's work and the Holy Spirit's work:

"The work of Christ concerns human nature which He recapitulates in His hypostasis. The work of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, concerns persons, being applied to each one singly. Within the Church the Holy Spirit imparts to human hypostases the fullness of deity after a manner which is unique, 'personal', appropriate to every man as a person created in the image of God.

Christ becomes the sole image appropriate to the common nature of humanity. The Holy Spirit grants to each person created in the image of God the possibility of fulfilling the likeness in the common nature. The one lends His hypostasis to the nature, the other gives His divinity to the persons. Thus, the work of Christ unifies; the work of the Holy Spirit diversifies.

Yet, the one is impossible without the other...Christ creates the unity of His mystical body through the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is communicated to human persons through Christ."[116]

This kind of ecclesiological view makes it possible that Lossky avoids the extremes of institutionalism and charismatic approach and succeeds in his own concept to integrate these views harmoniously.

"Indeed, it is possible to distinguish two communications of the Holy Spirit to the Church: one was effected by the breath of Christ when He appeared to His apostles on the evening of the day of His resurrection (John 20:19-23); the other by the personal coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-5). (Lossky, trans. Anon)

116 Lossky, V. N. *Ocherk misticheskogo bogoslovija Vostochnoj Cerkvi*, in the work Bogovidenie. Moscow 2006.

"…The first communication of the Holy Spirit belongs to the Church as a whole… The Holy Spirit is given to the whole flock of apostles, to which Christ at the same time gives the clerical right to bind and to release… Here the Holy Spirit is given to all apostles jointly, as if to join them to the clerical ministry and to give to them power for that. The Holy Spirit doesn't belong to separate individuals and He doesn't communicate to them any personal sanctity."

"The communication of the Holy Spirit by the time He personally descended was a different occasion: He was revealed as the third person fo the Holy Trinity, who as a person of the Trinity was in His origin independent of the Son… The point is not anymore the communication of the Holy Spirit to the Church as body [of Christ]. Here the mediation can't be the function of the fellowship. The Holy Spirit is communicated to persons and He signs every member of the Church with his seal as a sign of a personal and unique relationship to the Holy Trinity: thus He becomes 'present' in every person."

"The theology of the Church of the East has always separated the person of the Holy Spirit given of grace from the uncreated grace He communicates… The Holy Spirit identifies secretly into human person, although He continues to be uncommunicated to us. It is as if He would step on our site, for it is precisely He who, as apostle Paul says, shouts in our hearts: 'Abba, Father!' Actually, it should be said that the Holy Spirit as if steps aside as a person for the created persons to whom He has acquired the grace."

Lossky received criticism for being too unilateral in identifying Christ's mission with the institutional view of the church and the Holy Spirit with the individual/ charismatic view.

E The ecclesiology of fellowship

In current Orthodox theology it is generally agreed that the description of the Church should contain neither "Christomonism" nor "pneumatomonism", i.e., emphasizing one person of the Trinity at the expense of the others. An adequate view of the Church should be triadologically balanced. This is what Metropolitan John Zizioulas attempted to achieve in his work which was a critical and creative assessment of Lossky's ideas.

Metropolitan John constructs a fellowship-community ecclesiology (koinonia ecclesiology) in a special way using a Trinitarian ontology adapted from the Cappadocian Fathers using personalistics. Unlike Lossky, Zizioulas not only

emphasizes that the individual is not the same thing as nature, but he also highlights the individual's relative and communicative nature. He reinterprets existence as an environment of communication between individuals that allows him to escape from the clutches of outdated metaphysical schemata that prioritize existence and move instead towards a balanced model of the individual and nature. Thus the Holy Trinity appears as a model for the highest possible existence in human life, i.e., the existence of the Church, ecclesiological existence, existence in a koinonia with God and all the members of the Church, existence, in which the totalitarianism of the unity of nature and pluralism of individualism is transcended.[117]

F Eucharistic ecclesiology

An important element in 20th century Orthodox ecclesiology was "Eucharistic theology".

The founder of Eucharistic theology was Dean Nikolai Afanasiev, professor of canon law at the St Sergius Institute in Paris. He developed his idea in his article "*L'Église qui préside à l'amour*" and in his book "*Cerkov Svjatogo Duha*" (The Church of the Holy Spirit). Afanasiev criticized the process of "juridicization" taking place in the Church. From the days of Constantine, and thanks to the teachings of St Cyprian, the structure of the Church has always been conceived along similar lines to the structure of the state. Bishops were assigned the roles of high officials, under whom the priests and the laity serve. Afanasiev argued for a return to a "Eucharistic ecclesiology", i.e., one that is centered on the local congregation and built on the sacrament of the Eucharist. Just as there is no universal Eucharist, only the Eucharist celebrated among the members of local congregations, there is no universal Church in the proper sense of the word, only the unity of local congregations.[118]

The idea of Eucharistic ecclesiology was further developed by Alexander Schmemann. In his splendid work, "*The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*", Schmemann writes, "Being a sacrament in the most profound and comprehensive sense of the term, the Church creates, manifests and fulfils herself in and through the sacraments and above all through the 'sacrament of sacraments', the most holy Eucharist. For if, as we have just said, the Eucharist is the sacrament of the beginning and the end, of the world and its fulfilment as the kingdom of God, then

117 See Metropolitan John Zizioulas, *Bytie kak obschenie*. Moscow 2006

118 See Hyacinthe Destivelle, *Vshtrecha pravoslavnoj russkoj ekklesiologii s katolicheskoj ekklesiologiej v XIX-XX vv*. Manuscript.

it is completed by the Church's ascent to heaven, to the 'homeland of the heart's desire,' the *status patriae*—the messianic banquet of Christ, in his kingdom."

The profound intertwining of the Eucharist and the Church had, prior to Alexander Schmemann, already been touched on by Georges Florovsky in his article "The Eucharist and Sobornost": "The Eucharist reveals the mystery of sobornost, the mystery of the Church… in the Holy Eucharist the believers become Christ's Body. Therefore the Eucharist is the sacrament of the Church… Eucharistic unity is not merely a spiritual or moral unity, not merely the unity of will and feelings. It is a real and ontological unity, the actualization of living as one in Christ…In the Eucharist the human impenetrability is removed along with exclusivity. The believers become members in Christ, and thus members in one another…The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity, the sacrament of peace and love, and for this reason it is the sacrament of unity. It is the communion of love… in accordance with the model of love of the Trinity (John 15:9)… In concluding his farewells with a high priestly prayer the Savior prayed that the faithful would unite and be as one in Him (John 17:21-23). To us, who are separate and alone, this union in accordance with the model of the one and indivisible Trinity is only possible in Christ, his love and his body, sharing His Cup. The unity of the shared Church secretly describes the oneness of the Trinity: and just as the Trinity is one and divine life flows through it, the faithful (despite being many) have one spirit and one heart (cf Acts 4:32). And the Church recognizes this unity and sobornost and she realizes it foremost through the office of the sacrament of the Eucharist…"

G The cosmological and eschatological dimensions of ecclesiology

Eucharistic ecclesiology opens up new ways of examining the relationship between the world, the church and the kingdom of God.

"The Church… is a cosmic and eschatological mystery. Cosmic because "in this world" she is the original world, created by God, like the beginning, in whose light and in relation to which we can only acknowledge the loftiness of our high calling and through that, how deeply we have fallen from God. She is eschatological because the original world, manifested by the Church, has already been saved by Christ, and in its prayers and her liturgical life she is inseparable from the final goal for which she was created and redeemed, and 'so that God may be all in all.'" (1 Cor 15:28) The cosmic proportions of the Church's nature and mission are an important theme in the synthesis of theology and philosophy of religion produced

by dean Sergei Bulgakov. It is a topic that he focuses on in the final part of his theological trilogy, the Bride of the Lamb (1942).

H *The diaconic and missiological aspects of Eucharistic ecclesiology*

Finally, in the light of Eucharistic ecclesiology it is possible to re-examine the Church's mission and diakonia, "the liturgy after the liturgy". In his article of that name, Ion Bria has written: "This liturgical concentration, 'the Liturgy after the Liturgy', is essential for the Church, but it has to be understood in all its dimensions. There is a double movement in the Liturgy: on the one hand, the assembling of the people of God to perform the memorial of the death and resurrection of our Lord 'until He comes again'. It also manifests and realizes the process by which 'the cosmos is becoming ecclesia'… On the other hand, renewed by the Holy Communion and the Holy Spirit, the members of the Church are sent to be authentic witness to Jesus Christ in the world. The mission of the Church rests upon the radiating and transforming power of the liturgy. It is a stimulus in sending out the people of God to the world to proclaim the Gospel and to be involved in man's liberation."

THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY. A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Bishop Matti Repo

The Church as a community in earlier dialogues

Key aspects of ecclesiology have been discussed in the dialogues between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church since the very first session held at Sinappi in 1970. We have achieved common ground on aspects that have significance for the theme of the current session, the church as a community. In various meetings, common theses have been compiled, the most important of which concern "The Eucharist as a manifestation of the unity of the believers" (Sinappi 1970), "The nature of the church from the perspective of faith, love and the Eucharist" (Leningrad 1983), "Holiness, sanctification and the saints" (Mikkeli 1986), and "Freedom of a Christian, freedom of the church, and freedom of religion" (Lappeenranta 1998). Furthermore, the topic has been discussed on the international stage between the Lutheran World Federation and the Orthodox churches. In this presentation I shall refer to several of the theses compiled at these dialogues.

The theses are a result of theological consultations in which ecclesiology has been discussed neither separately nor in isolation, but starting with the central aspects of Christian doctrine that lie at the heart of the topic. The most important of these are the doctrines of the Trinity and of the two natures of Christ. These lay the foundation for ecclesiology on which the constitutive factors of the church are based upon, namely, according to Lutheran understanding, the proclamation of the word of God, the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist and the ministry of the church that proclaims the gospel and administers the sacraments. By the means of these, God creates the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. For this reason the issue of the church as a community must be examined against the background of Trinitarian doctrine, Christology and pneumatology.

The Trinitarian, Christological and Pneumatological basis

It is emphasized in the Lutheran church that the highest authority in doctrine are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Holy Bible. According to the Lutheran confessions, they are "sole rule and standard according to which all doctrines together with [all] teachers should be estimated and judged". In accordance with this the Book of Concord does not base its arguments on the theology of Luther or Melanchthon or other reformers, but on the Scriptures and on the writings of the Church Fathers commenting on them.

We will hear a separate exegetical presentation in this conference, but systematic theology also employs the Bible as its vantage point of view. I shall begin my presentation with four biblical passages, in which the Trinity of God forms the foundation for our salvation and, consequently, grants the church its communal nature. I shall first refer to the narrative of Jesus' baptism in the Gospel of Matthew:

"And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' (Matt 3:16-17)"

Jesus' baptism forms the basis for the baptism by which he sends his disciples forth to baptize. It provides a theological starting point for the birth of the church through the work of the apostles he sent forth The narrative involves the whole Holy Trinity: The Father announces the Son by proclaiming His love for him. The Son, who in the Gospel of John is the eternal Word (John 1), is himself the love spoken by the Father in eternity. He is the one whom God sends to become human and of whom God urges: "listen to him!" (Matt 17:5). The Holy Spirit, whom the Father sends, is the hypostatical love between the Father and the Son. The Spirit rests upon the Son and leads those who hear his voice to partake of what the Father is bestowing through His Son The whole Trinity is present at Jesus' baptism to make humanity participate in the life that exists in God. Jesus' own baptism becomes a means for humanity's salvation, when Jesus sends his disciples forth to baptize others in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). In holy baptism one enters into union with the triune God and also with all those who have been baptized. God's own acts as the Father, the Son and as the Holy Spirit create the church, a community of salvation.

The koinonia of the persons of the Trinity and koinonia among Christians

The second biblical passage is Paul's salutation at the end of the second Letter to the Corinthians:

> " The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. (2 Cor 13:13)"

In the apostle's salutation the triune God is active in all his persons: the grace of the Son, the love of the Father, the communion of the Holy Spirit. The communion – or "participation", as the Greek *koinonia* could be translated – means participation in the life that exists within God himself. Communion with God creates a spiritual communion between all who participate in His life. They also take part in each other's lives.

The relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is *koinonia*, in which the three persons are of one essence. Paul's closing salutation to the Corinthians contains a message of salvation formulated according to Trinitarian doctrine. At the same time it also expresses the fundamental nature of the church: the church is the communion in the Holy Spirit of those people who partake of God's love and Christ's grace, communion with God and with each other. This dual *koinonia* is also expressed in the opening words of the epistle 1 John:

> "We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3) "

In the church, the baptized share *koinonia* with the apostles and with all of Christ's own, and also with God Himself in all His persons. I shall refer to the opening words of 1 Peter:

> "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance. (1 Peter 1:1-2)"

This letter is not addressed to just one local congregation, but to Christians in different areas. Nevertheless they still form one entity as God's chosen ones.

Again, the Trinity has made a single entity out of these people. In accordance with the Father's plan, they are living in obedience to Him, sanctified by the Holy Spirit and cleansed by the blood of the Son.

Despite the distances between them, different groups of Christians form a single community of the baptized. They have a shared *koinonia*, they are included in the same life in God and they share the same calling as Christ's church.

Approximately two decades ago, *koinonia* ecclesiology was much discussed in the ecumenical movement. It was a central theme for example for the general assembly of the *Faith & Order* commission in Santiago de Compostela in 1993. *Koinonia* ecclesiology is typically regarded as having three elements: the Trinity, the Eucharist and the communion of local churches. Firstly, the basis of the church is the *koinonia* between the three persons of God: Trinitarian *koinonia* sums up the mystery of God's work. His creative, redemptive, and sanctifying work as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit forms one entity, and the church also derives its essence from the *koinonia* of these persons. Secondly, the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is *koinonia* with Christ and with all those who partake of the same bread and wine. In the sacrament one becomes part of God's gifts in Christ, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Christ's life also unites those who belong to him, and together they become partakers of each other's lives. Thirdly, the various local and regional churches are called upon to live in *koinonia* together, just as the various congregations and dioceses of one church are in mutual communion.

Baptism confers salvation and incorporates a believer to the Church

God has prepared salvation which he then brings about in all three of His persons. The Father has, in his love, sent the Son to become flesh to use His Holy Spirit to make people part of the life that exists within Him. This happens through holy baptism. Through baptism one also becomes a member of the church, the community of salvation. Baptism also makes one a part of the gifts of salvation that God as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bestows. Baptism creates an unbroken bond between all who have been baptized. All those who have been baptized in Christ have clothed themselves with Christ, as Paul writes in the Letter to the Galatians (3:27). They have also been made members of Christ's body, as the apostle describes in many of his letters (e.g., Rom 12:5, 1 Cor 12:27, Eph 1:23, Col 1:18).

Lutherans and Orthodox share a deep-rooted agreement that baptism is the sacrament that incorporates people to the church. This has been observed in both the dialogues between the Finns and the Russians, as well as on the international level between the Lutheran World Federation and the Orthodox churches. In 1983, in Leningrad as it was then called, the following observations were made:

> "The most essential of all the definitions of the Church in the New Testament is "the body of Christ", often used by Paul the Apostle. We have become members of the Church of Christ through faith and baptism into Christ, (Gal 3:26-28) who is the Head of the body. (Leningrad 1983, 1.3)"

The link between holy baptism and sanctification was further explored in the next theological discussions in Mikkeli in 1986:

> "People have a share in sanctification when in the sacrament of baptism they are joined through faith in the mystical body of Christ. They become members of the Church of Christ. [...](Mikkeli 1986, 1.11)

Sanctification takes place in the church, where the Holy Spirit works in the Word of God and in the holy sacraments. […] (Mikkeli 1986, 1.12)"

The international Lutheran-Orthodox Commission has in its more recent phases focused on ecclesiology from the beginning of the 21st century. It has worked on the general theme of "the mystery of the Church" and has divided it up into different categories in which the word of God as well as the sacraments of baptism and communion are studied. In a meeting held in Durau, Romania, in 2004, the issue of baptism and anointment with myrrh (chrism) as a sacrament of initiation and joining the church were explored.

(indent) Lutherans and Orthodox agree that entry into the life of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is a gift given by God through the sacraments, which are enacted in the church. […] (Durau 2004, 1)

There are three basic components in the process of Christian initiation: death with Christ, resurrection with Christ, and the sealing with the Holy Spirit. […] (Durau 2004, 2) (end indent)

The communiqué from the Durau conference contains eleven theses in all and culminates with a summary, which states that the three components of Christian initiation mentioned in the second thesis play a major role in both Lutheran and Orthodox liturgies, even though there are differences:

> "Orthodox and Lutherans at their meeting in Durau, October 6-15, 2004, found that the three components of Christian initiation are to a large extent included in each other's rites. These components find their fulfillment in the Christian's full participation in the life of Christ and his church through eating his body and drinking his blood in the holy Eucharist. […] (Durau 2004, 11) "

The Eucharist as the sacrament of communion

The communion between the baptized is fulfilled in the holy communion, in the sacrament of the Eucharist. There they share *koinonia* both with Christ and with each other. Partaking of the sacrament means inclusion in Christ and in all others who participate in the same sacrament. Paul the Apostle writes in the First Letter to the Corinthians:

(indent) The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (1 Cor 10:16-17) (end indent)

The sacrament of the Eucharist as a manifestation and way of achieving union with Christ and mutual communion is not only a theme found in the New Testament, but in patristics as well. Both Western and Eastern Church Fathers have written about it. From them it was passed down into medieval western theology and from there to Lutheranism. Over the past few years it has been increasingly emphasized in Finnish Lutheranism. The Bible passage quoted above is used in celebrating the Divine Service in accordance with the recommendation of our church's *Guide to Divine Service* in the breaking of the great host after the Agnus Dei, just before the call to communion. The celebrant elevates the consecrated communion bread, breaks it and says "The bread that we break, is a sharing in the body of Christ. Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." In this regard the Eucharistic liturgy of our church has developed primarily as a result of our participation in the ecumenical movement. We have a greater appreciation for the mystery of the Eucharist as a sacrament of communion, *koinonia*.

Augustine, the Church Father, connects the sacrament of the Eucharist and the unity of the church in several of his Easter sermons. Christ's sacramental and

ecclesiastical body are interlocked. The body of Christ shared out and received correctly during the Eucharist makes the church Christ's body:

> "If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive (Sermon 227) If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving. (Sermo 229/A 272)"

The congregation is itself to be what the loaf distributed to it from the altar is:

> "What you receive is what you yourselves are [...] But just as one loaf is made from single grains collected together and somehow mixed in with each other into dough, so in the same way the body of Christ is made one by the harmony of charity. And what grains are for the body of Christ, grapes are for his blood; because wine too comes out from the press, and what was separated one by one in many grapes flows together into a unity, and becomes wine. Thus both in the bread and in the cup there is the mystery, the sacrament, of unity. (Sermon 229/A)"

In *De civitate Dei* Augustine emphasizes that the proper reception of the Eucharist necessitates communion with other Christians. To those who set themselves apart, the gift of communion with Christ granted in the Eucharist is not a benefit but a judgment:

> "He then who is in the unity of Christ's body (that is to say, in the Christian membership), of which body the faithful have been wont to receive the sacrament at the altar, that man is truly said to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ. And consequently heretics and schismatics being separate from the unity of this body, are able to receive the same sacrament, but with no profit to themselves – nay, rather to their own hurt, so that they are rather more severely judged than liberated after some time. For they are not in that bond of peace which is symbolized by that sacrament. (City of God 21:25, trans. M. Dods)"

The Church Father John Chrysostom preached the following on 1 Corinthians:

> "The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the Body of Christ? Wherefore said he not, the participation? Because he intended to express something more and to point out how close was the union: in that we communicate not only by participating and partaking, but also by being

> united. For as that body is united to Christ, so also are we united to him by this bread (Hom. 1 Cor. XXIV [10:16], trans. www.newadvent.org).“
>
> “For what is the bread? The Body of Christ. And what do they become who partake of it? The Body of Christ: not many bodies, but one body. For as the bread consisting of many grains is made one, so that the grains nowhere appear; they exist indeed, but their difference is not seen by reason of their conjunction; so are we conjoined both with each other and with Christ (Homily on First Corinthians, XXIV [10:17], trans. T. Chambers)”

John of Damascus writes in his principle dogmatic treatise, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*,

> “Participation [in the Eucharist] is spoken of; for through it we partake of the divinity of Jesus. Communion, too, is spoken of, and it is an actual communion, because through it we have communion with Christ and share in His flesh and His divinity: yea, we have communion and are united with one another through it. For since we partake of one bread, we all become one body of Christ and one blood, and members one of another, being of one body with Christ. (De Fide Orth. IV, 13)”

Thomas Aquinas quotes John of Damascus in his *Summa Theologica*:

(indent) This sacrament has a threefold significance. one with regard to the past, inasmuch as it is commemorative of our Lord’s Passion, which was a true sacrifice, as stated above (Question 48, Article 3), and in this respect it is called a “Sacrifice.” With regard to the present it has another meaning, namely, that of Ecclesiastical unity, in which men are aggregated through this Sacrament; and in this respect it is called “Communion” or Synaxis. For Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iv) that “it is called Communion because we communicate with Christ through it, both because we partake of His flesh and Godhead, and because we communicate with and are united to one another through it.” With regard to the future it has a third meaning, inasmuch as this sacrament foreshadows the Divine fruition, which shall come to pass in heaven; and according to this it is called “Viaticum,” because it supplies the way of winning thither. And in this respect it is also called the “Eucharist,” that is, “good grace,” because “the grace of God is life everlasting” (Romans 6:23); or because it really contains Christ, Who is “full of grace.” In Greek, moreover, it is called Metalepsis, i.e. “Assumption,” because, as Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iv), “we thereby assume the Godhead of the Son.” (S.Th. 3 q73 a4) (end indent)

Our churches have joined in these views in earlier discussions. In the very first discussions at Sinappi in 1970, a joint declaration of significance of the Eucharist as a sacrament of Unity was recorded:

> "The eucharist, as a sacrament instituted by Christ, is the clearest manifestation of the unity of Christians with the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, and through him also of the Christians' mutual unity as members of the church, the body of Christ. (Sinappi 1970, 2.A.3)"

A similar dual connection between Christ and all members of the church was confirmed at the Leningrad discussions in 1983:

> "In participating in the Holy Communion the Christian is strengthened as a member of the Church, the body of Christ. So, all Christians together are the mystical body of Christ. Unity in God as well as unity in faith and love between the members of the whole Church is realized in the Holy Communion." (Leningrad 1983, 1.6)

The international dialogues between the Lutheran World Federation and the Orthodox churches resulted in a similar statement in Bratislava in 2006:

> "Orthodox and Lutherans agree that the Eucharist is also a gift of communion granted to us by Christ. In this communion we are fully united with him and with the members of his body. (Bratislava 2006, 2.d)"

The Church as a community celebrating the Eucharist in the theology of Martin Luther

The Lutheran church follows the western Catholic tradition. In its doctrine of the Eucharist if follows the belief inherited from the apostles and the Church Fathers of the true presence of Christ. The communion bread and wine are Christ's body and blood. The criticism levied by Lutheran reformers at the practices of the church of their time was not directed at the doctrine of real presence, but at its interpretation under the terms of Aristotelian philosophy. To Lutherans, Holy Communion is a sacrament in which the crucified Christ offers his body and blood to be consumed in the bread and wine. Holy Communion is about forgiveness of sins, it is also a meal of thanksgiving, *Eucharist*. It is important,

given the theme of these discussions, to emphasize the meaning of the Eucharist as a meal of fellowship.

In the Holy Eucharist, the communion with Christ and other Christians is perfected. The fellowship is not merely spiritual, even though the Holy Spirit unites all believers, but it is also material, because Christ's body and blood are consumed in the sacrament and the faithful share in a communal life. The sacrament of the Eucharist is the focal point of community and sharing in each other's lives in the theology of Martin Luther as well.

As an Augustinian monk, Luther inherited the Early Church doctrine on the Eucharist, which unifies and includes one in Christ and in other Christ's own as well, who in turn are included in us. Because in the Eucharist Christ's sacramental body and ecclesiastical body are contained one within the other, in the Eucharist one consumes not only Christ's sacrifice but all his saints and is thus included in their lives. Those partaking of the Eucharist should never imagine that they participate in the sacrament in order to be alone with their Lord. The Divine Service is a communal event, because the congregation is not made up of isolated Christians. Baptism has already made them members of the same body, and in the Holy Communion they share themselves with others as they partake of Christ's body and blood. Partakers in the Eucharist sacrifice themselves, lose their self-centeredness and become one with others.

In the sermon *A Treatise Concerning the Blessed Sacrament and Concerning the Brotherhoods* (1519), Luther complements the Early Church theology of the communion meal. During the Eucharist, more than just the good gifts of salvation are shared, sin and suffering are shared as well. True Christian brotherhood is about sharing one's table with the poor. Christians give of themselves and also take on the distress, suffering and neediness of others. Luther writes:

> "The significance or purpose of this sacrament is the fellowship of all saints, whence it derives its common name synaxis or communio, that is, fellowship; and communicare means to take part in this fellowship, or as we say, to go to the sacrament, because Christ and all saints are one spiritual body, just as the inhabitants of a city are one community and body, each citizen being a member of the other and a member of the entire city. [...] Just as the bread is made out of many grains which have been ground and mixed together, and out of the many bodies of grain there comes the one body of the bread, in which each grain loses its form and body and acquires the common body of the bread, and as the drops of wine losing their own form become the body of one wine: so should it be with

> us, and is, indeed, if we use this sacrament aright. Christ with all saints, by His love, takes upon Himself our form, fights with us against sin, death and all evil; this enkindles in us such love that we take His form, rely upon His righteousness, life and blessedness, and through the interchange of His blessings and our misfortunes are one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and have all things in common. "This is a great sacrament," says Paul, "that Christ and the Church are one flesh and bone." [...] Finally, the blessing of this sacrament is fellowship and love, by which we are strengthened against death and all evil. This fellowship is twofold: on the one hand we partake of Christ and all saints, on the other hand we permit all Christians to be partakers of us, in whatever way they and we are able; so that by this sacrament all self-seeking love is uprooted and gives place to love which seeks the common good of all, and through this mutual love there is one bread, one drink, one body, one community, – that is the true union of Christian brethren. (Trans. J. J. Schindel)"

Participants in the Eucharist share each other's parts and also bear each other's sin and shame. This means that the church is a community, or *koinonia*. Its members include the saints who have made it to heaven. Even those who have passed away in faith participate in the sharing and bearing of our sins. They fight together against sin, because no one is a Christian alone. This aspect of Lutheranism is at times obscured, especially when warning against "worshipping" saints. It is important to remember, however, that to Lutherans as well the church transcends the limits of time and place, and in celebrating the Eucharist the congregation struggling in the present times participates in the same celebration as the congregation rejoicing in eternity. For this reason the priest introduces to the triple exultation, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth", i.e. the Sanctus hymn, by saying: "We thank you for this gift from heaven, and with all your angels and saints we sing our praise to you." All the saints are present in the communion mass, and we have a sacramental link to them.

The Church is a spiritual and physical community

About a decade after the sermon quoted above was written, the Reformation in Germany had progressed to a different point. Luther was engaged in a theological dispute with those who had joined the Reformation but insisted that the communion bread and wine was only metaphorically the body and blood of Christ. Now, Luther emphasizes Christ's real presence and the forgiveness of sins in his Eucharistic theology more than the communion of believers. But it is the

real union with Christ in Luther's theology that creates the basis for the mutual sacramental communion between the faithful.

In the *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528), Luther defends the doctrine of Christ's real presence; the bread and wine are truly Christ's body and blood, and they are shared amongst all who participate in the Eucharist. Even those who do not believe receive Christ's body and blood. Their lack of faith does not diminish the reality of the sacrament, just as the faith of genuine Christians does not make it real. The congregation is a community, in which the good are mixed with the bad. Even those who do not believe share Christ's body with those who do. The church, although in its true essence spiritual, is also a concrete, physical community that contains both saints and sinners:

> ""We who are many are one body", i.e., a group, a community, just as every city is a particular body or society in distinction from another city. From this it does not follow that all members of this body are holy, spiritual members and so have only a spiritual fellowship, but it is a physical group or body in which are both holy and unholy people who together partake of the one bread. (Trans. R.H. Fischer, Luther's Works: American Edition, Vol 37, p. 355)"

The physical and concrete church consists of real people. On the other hand, the Church of Christ is spiritual and trespasses all human borders. It is a community of faith. This Church can be scattered in different parts of the world, but it still is spiritually under the one head, Christ. As such it is one whole, one community, which consists of all those who believe in Christ everywhere in the world:

> "Next, I believe that there is one holy Christian Church on earth. i.e. the community or number or assembly of all Christians in all the world, the one bride of Christ, and his spiritual body of which he is the only head. The bishops or priests are not her heads or lords or bridegrooms, but servants, friends, and – as the word 'bishop' implies – superintendents, guardians, or stewards. This Christian Church exists not only in the realm of the Roman Church or pope, but in all the world, as the prophet foretold that the gospel of Christ would spread throughout the world, Psalm 2 [:8], Psalm 19 [:4]. Thus this Christian Church is physically dispersed among pope, Turks, Persians, Tartars, but spiritually gathered in one gospel and faith, under one head, i.e. Jesus Christ. (Luther's Works, vol. 37, 367)"

Luther's *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* does not treat Eucharistic theology in isolation, but instead, sets the sacrament in a broader doctrinal

context. Thus it also presents the Eucharist as a meal of communion, in which the triune God makes the faithful participants in all his gifts. The treatise ends with a compendium in which Luther draws together the three articles of the Credo. This can be regarded as a key to understanding Luther's communion ecclesiology, because in it the reformer explains the three persons of God by describing how each person bestows itself. God is self-bestowing love. He bestows himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The triune God's work to save humanity gives birth to the church, a community where God's gifts are shared:

> "These are the three persons and one God, who has given himself to us all wholly and completely, with all that he is and has. The Father gives himself to us, with heaven and earth and all the creatures, in order that they may serve us and benefit us. But these gifts have become obscured and useless through Adam's fall. Therefore the Son himself subsequently gave himself and bestowed all his works, sufferings, wisdom and righteousness, and reconciled us to the Father, in order that restored to life and righteousness, we might also know and have the Father and his gifts.

But because this grace would benefit no one if it remained so profoundly hidden and could not come to us, the Holy Spirit comes and gives himself to us also, wholly and completely. He teaches us to understand this deed of Christ which has been manifested to us, helps us receive and preserve it, use it to our advantage and impart it to others, increase and extend it. He does this both inwardly and outwardly by means of faith and other spiritual gifts, outwardly through the gospel, baptism, and the sacrament of the altar, through which as through three means or methods he comes to us and inculcates the sufferings of Christ for the benefit of our salvation. (ibid., p. 366)"

The gospel and the sacraments bring Christ to people to be received with faith. According to Luther, faith unites people with Christ and makes them share God's gifts with their neighbors. Communion with God and communion with other people belong together and are different sides of the same salvation. In the church, *unio* through faith with Christ and the *communio* with him and all his own that arises during the Eucharist, take place simultaneously.

The triune God gives Himself and creates the Church

Luther's *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* presages his *Large Catechism* (1530), in which the three articles of faith are explained in the same way using the triune God who gives Himself. The Father has given Himself in creating the world, bestowing life and maintaining it; the Son has given himself by becoming flesh and using his own blood to redeem humanity from sin, death, and the devil. The Holy Spirit gives himself in the church through the word of the gospel and the sacraments of baptism and communion, as well as confession. The job of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify or to escort people to partake of redemption and to lead them to eternal life. This the Spirit does by means of the church:

> "I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints, under one head, even Christ, called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, one mind, and understanding, with manifold gifts, yet agreeing in love, without sects or schisms. I am also a part and member of the same, a sharer and joint owner of all the goods it possesses, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Spirit by having heard and continuing to hear the Word of God, which is the beginning of entering it. (Large Catechism, II.51-2)"

In the *Large Catechism*, Luther considers how best to translate the concept of *communio sanctorum*, the communion of saints, into German. He rejects the commonly used word *Gemeinschaft* (communion). To Luther, *communio sanctorum* is not a *Gemeinschaft der Heiligen*, a communion of saints, but a *Gemein[d]e der Heiligen*, a congregation of saints. Similarly, he believes the Greek and Latin *ecclesia*, church, should be translated as *Versammlung*, assembly, rather than *Kirche*, so to make it clearer that it is about an assembled community of people rather than a building. (Large Catechism, II.47-50)

It should be noted that behind the Greek term *ekklesia* employed in the New Testament lies the Hebrew term *qahal*, which means an assembly. In the Septuagint it is translated using *ekklesia*, meaning the people of God assembled for service. Literally, *ekklesia* means "those called out of the house for a meeting". In the New Testament it is used to mean both a local congregation and the church as a whole (Acts 9:31), as well as to an assembly in the secular sense (Acts 19:41).

The Church as a community according to the Augsburg Confession

The primary part of the Lutheran *Book of Concord* is the Augsburg Confession (1530), which can be regarded as the third most important text after the Holy Bible and the three creeds of the old Church (*Apostolicum, Nicaenum, Athanasianum*). It should be noted that Lutherans do not regard the Augsburg Confession as a definitive exposition on Christianity or a source of church doctrine. It merely attempts to articulate, using the terms of the catholic faith inherited from the apostles and the Church Fathers, how Lutherans understand the passages that became points of contention with Rome during the Reformation. The *Confession* does not purport to introduce novelties, but sticks to the old and shared faith. Lutherans do not regard themselves as protestant, but as catholic and apostolic.

For this reason the articles in the *Confessio Augustana* that deal with the church, do not contain a complete doctrine on the church. The Confession only presents the conditions under which it would have been possible to maintain church unity at the 1530 Diet of Augsburg. That is why the articles in the beginning attempt to demonstrate the shared faith in which the Lutherans do not deviate from the doctrine of the Catholic faith. The articles toward the end on the other hand present the abuses that need to be removed from church life, since they are not considered old church doctrine inherited from the apostles.

For example, the last article, number XXVIII, rejects the earthly power of bishops, but does not question episcopacy as the right form of church order but instead emphasizes that the congregations must be loyal to the bishop's teaching. The ecclesiological articles at the beginning of the *Augustana* should be read in relation to the last article about episcopacy. Only in that context can the Lutheran understanding of the church and ministry be correctly seen. The office of priest belongs together with the office of bishop. The bishop's duty is to see that the gospel is preached purely and the sacraments are administrated correctly as Christ instituted them. The ministry of the bishop serves the church's unity and continuity.

The seventh article of the *Augustana* states:

> "Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the

> administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4:5-6. (CA VII)"

At first glance this article seems to contain a fairly narrow definition of the church, but it is not intended as such, merely to express the conditions for maintaining the integrity of the western church at the time. It does not set out everything that happens in the church or what is important in the church, and it should not be interpreted as a minimalistic ecclesiology. It was written at a time when the ties between reformation congregations and the bishops had not yet been severed in Germany. In the kingdom of Sweden, of which Finland was a part, that never even happened, instead episcopal succession continued unbroken, albeit without a connection to Rome. The "doctrine of the gospel" mentioned in the article should not be interpreted too narrowly, but it should be regarded together with the preceding articles on God, original sin, the Son of God, justification, the ministry of the church and new obedience (I-VI). The foundation of the gospel are the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology, which have been articulated in the three Early Church creeds mentioned above.

In the seventh article, the concept of the "congregation of saints" and proclaiming the gospel and administering the sacraments are made interdependent. Because the gospel and the sacraments are means of grace, through which God gives the Holy Spirit (CA V), it is correct to emphasize the second half of this sentence, i.e., God's work in the gospel and the sacraments. Theologically they precede the community of believers. It is how God creates the congregation of saints. But on the other hand, the gospel and sacraments only exist in a congregation of saints where the word is proclaimed and the sacraments are administered.

The term, *congregatio sanctorum*, used in the article is slightly different from the concept of *communio sanctorum* that appears in the Apostolic Creed. Scholarship has focused on its Augustinian background; the term was probably chosen to emphasize the union with the means of grace, i.e., holy things, rather than the departed holy people. On the other hand, the concept of *congregatio sanctorum* probably derives from Thomas Aquinas, who in his commentary on the Apostolic Creed states that the church is an assembly or congregation of the faithful (*congregatio fidelium*). Lutherans do not mean that it is possible to separate the saints and sinners from within the church, but that in its internal, spiritual essence, the church is a community of those who believe in Christ.

The German text in fact proclaims that the church is *Versammlung aller Gläubigen*, a congregation of all the faithful. This community cannot merely be a local assembly of believers, but because it is the congregation of all the faithful, it must include Christ's own everywhere in the world, and at all times. As is stated in the article, this "one holy Church is to continue forever" (*perpetuo mansura*). That is why it is also *communio sanctorum*, a communion of saints, not just a congregation of assembled holy persons (*congregatio sanctorum*). It also includes communion with holy people who have passed away.

In the Lutheran-Orthodox theological discussions between the Finnish and Russian churches, the theme of "Holiness, sanctification and the saints" was addressed in Mikkeli in 1986. In the joint theses the following observations were made:

> "Christians, whose faith has produced rich fruits in this life and are held in high regard because of their good works should be remembered in church. They should be regarded with respect and love, and their example should be a source of instruction. (Mikkeli 1986, 1.15)"

The sanctifying community – community of sharing and reconciliation

According to the Lutheran understanding, God makes people participants in the gifts of the Holy Trinity through faith. This happens in church, through the proclaiming of the gospel, the sacraments of baptism and communion, and the absolution of sins in confession. Through them God sanctifies people by making them participants in what Christ is. The Son of God made flesh is himself present in the proclamation of the gospel and administering of the sacraments. In him God and man are combined, and thus in communion with him people may become participants in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

God shares His gifts with people, and people are meant to share them with each other. In the Holy Communion the divine gifts are combined: God's gifts as the Father who sends the Son, and the Son's gift of the sacrifice on the cross which he shares with us in the sacrament of his body and blood, and the Holy Spirit's gifts through which faith is strengthened and people receive eternal life and sanctity. The Holy Communion and service of love belong tightly together. The sacrament of the altar has a direct theological link with diakonia. Diakonia is the

inevitable continuation of the sacrifice made by Christ. Antithetically, one could say that without the sharing that happens in love, the congregation celebrating the Eucharist is not the community – *koinonia* – where Christ's gifts can properly flow. Partakers of the Eucharist who focus on themselves are like the Corinthians whom the apostle Paul admonished for not consuming the Lord's supper correctly:

> "When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? (1 Cor 11:20-22)"

The church is Christ's body and a community of sharing. It is God's instrument on earth for achieving His goals. It is part of God's work in reconciling the world to Him (2 Cor 5:19). Through the church, God sanctifies the world, releases people from the power of evil, uses the gospel to cleanse people from sin, and gives new hope. Christ guides his church to serve the weak, feed the hungry, cure the sick and lift up the oppressed just as he himself has done.

God has given birth to the church by sending His Son to atone for the sins of the world. He has sent his Holy Spirit to make all people part of this reconciliation in Christ. Through the sacraments, people partake of this reconciliation in the church. In the church different people receive the gift of life in Christ. This life of Christ they share amongst themselves as members of his mystical body. Partaking of Christ's and each other's lives culminates in the sacrament of the holy Eucharist. A church that celebrates the Eucharist is fulfilling God's plan of reconciliation. In the sacrament of the Eucharist, people's mutual reconciliation attains its deepest expression. It is a "sacrament of human reconciliation par excellence", as the international Lutheran-Orthodox Commission agreed some years ago:

(indent) Because it [the Eucharist] unites believers with each other at the Lord's table, the Eucharist is the Sacrament of human reconciliation par excellence. (Bratislava 2006, 8) (end indent)

This reconciliation does not just take place spiritually, but physically as well. Sharing Christ's life in the Eucharist is at the same time sharing mutual life between people, sharing our suffering, need and sins. Christ makes this possible for us, and we do the same for each other when we celebrate the Eucharist. This is why the church's social work, service is based in the Eucharist, derives its strength from it and is fulfilled by it.

The congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland usually have a strong diakonia. The weak, sick and needy are cared for in many ways. But the connection of diakonia to the Lord's Supper is not always evident. This is why the spiritual dimension of diakonia is often thin, just as celebrating the sacraments remains a narrow phenomenon of personal spirituality. This area needs developing. Seeing the church as a sacramental communion, a sanctifying union between Christ and all its members shows the way towards this.

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Archimandrite Kirill (Govorun)

In these times one of the church's most important pastoral duties is to ensure that her members develop a well-balanced Christian identity. This is by no means a minor or artificial duty. It arises from the very real circumstances of religion in modern society, which in turn is evident from the statistics gathered from sociological polls.

It is worth mentioning a few studies related to this issue carried out by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM). In January 2010, this research center carried out a poll, according to which 75% of the inhabitants of the Russian Federation support Orthodoxy.[119] Only 8% of responders identified as non-religious. The majority of Orthodox Russians have been baptized (84%). At the same time, over a third (39%) of those identifying as non-religious had been baptized. 54% of practicing Orthodox said they are familiar with the Bible. A much larger percentage (73%) observed religious customs that are part of the Orthodox tradition.

In another study, the VCIOM analyzed what religious customs Orthodox Russians observe, and what sort of behavioral patterns are affected by their proclaimed religious identity.[120] To the question, "do you observe religious holidays", 85% of Orthodox replied in the affirmative; to the question "do you hold a baptismal cross" 59% said yes; 28% know a few prayers by heart and recited them regularly; 20% fast; 13% talk to a priest or pastor; 23% regularly go to church; 14% actively participate in the life of the congregation; 60% give alms and help the needy; and, finally, 70% of Orthodox say they live according to God's commandments.

119 Poll carried out by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) on January 23-24 2010. 1600 responders from 140 settlements in Russia's 42 counties and republics. Statistical margin of error 3.4%. Results published in press release No. 1461. http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=268&uid=13365. [Accessed July 31, 2011].

120 Poll carried out by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) on January 23-24 2010. 1600 responders from 140 settlements in Russia's 42 counties and republics. Statistical margin of error 3.4%. Results published in press release No. 1465. http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=268&uid=13385. [Accessed July 31, 2011].

Two years previously, in 2008, VCIOM investigated what Russians consider to be the most essential thing about religion.[121] The answers given do however reflect the opinions of all responders, not just the Orthodox. Nevertheless, when taken into account that in 2008 73% of the population identified as Orthodox, i.e., 2% fewer than in 2010, these results more or less correspond to the views of the Orthodox. This is the breakdown of answers where responders were asked to complete the phrase "To me personally, religion above all means…"

1) National tradition, the faith of my forebears – 39%

2) Part of world culture and heritage – 21%

3) Observing ethical and moral precepts – 26%

4) Observing all aspects of religious life and participation in the church – 10%

5) And, finally, a personal relationship with God – 17%

All the figures presented reflect different aspects of the religious identity of people who consider themselves to be believers. What is noteworthy is that while only a few stated they had an active spiritual life (only a few stated that they pray, take an active part in the congregation, partake of the Eucharist or considering the goal of their religiosity to be union with God and salvation), a very large part of the "Orthodox" consider Orthodoxy to be traditional and part of their culture and national identity.

This situation has been commented on in an interesting way by M. A. Tarusin, the Head of Sociological Research at the Institute for Public Planning: "70-75% (of those identifying as Orthodox – *archim. Kirill*) – that only represents the portion of responders who when asked "Do you consider yourself belonging to a particular religious group" replied "Yes, I consider myself Orthodox." These numbers reveal little about people's religiosity. This identification is based on national traditions, family traditions and culture. Insofar as these numbers can be considered indicative of anything, they are a demonstration of modern Russian identity. But they do not demonstrate real religious belonging. If the defining criterion of being Orthodox is attending confession or communion once or twice

121 Poll carried out by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) on January 23-24 2010. 1600 responders from 140 settlements in Russia's 42 counties and republics. Statistical margin of error 3.4%. Results published in press release No. 1116.
http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=268&uid=11099 . [Accessed July 31, 2011].

a year, then Orthodox comprise 18-20% of the population. There can be a wide variety of shades existing within the defined parameters. Therefore 60% of those responding to the VCIOM questionnaire are not Orthodox. If they do go to church, then it is once or twice a year like some sort of public service: they come to ask for the blessing of the kulich, to obtain holy water, etc. The majority do not even attend church for that, there are many who do not even believe in God but still call themselves Orthodox."[122]

I doubt I am mistaken if I say that a similar situation prevails in other societies as well where some sort of traditional religion exists, be it Catholicism, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, etc. This raises the question: should we settle for the majority of our citizens having a religious identity in keeping with our denomination and overlook the fact that this identity barely overlaps with true Christian identity?

What can we do, so that the number of those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior or generally believe in God is not significantly smaller than the number of people who simply declare themselves to be Orthodox, Lutheran, Catholic, etc.?

As far as I can tell, the path to answering this question involves establishing a true Christian identity for our church members, and ensuring that their other religious attributes (e.g., cultural and national identities) are connected to their Christian identity.

What could the aspects of this true Christian identity be? I would propose the following:

1) Belief in one God (monotheistic identity)

2) At least a partial understanding of the Trinity (Trinitarian identity)

3) Belief in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection and its importance for humanity's salvation (Christological identity)

4) Experience of the Holy Spirit and recognition that the blessing of the Holy Spirit is important for Christians (pneumatological identity)

122 Сколько православных в России? (How Many Orthodox Are There In Russia?) Blog "Православие и мир" (Orthodoxy and the World).
http://www.pravmir.ru/skolko-pravoslavnyx-v-rossii/ [accessed July 31, 2011].

5) The significance of God's theophany and recognizing that the Holy Scriptures are the most perfect witness of God's theophany. (Biblical identity)

6) The feeling of belonging to a congregation (and recognizing that a congregation is bound to its bishop) (ecclesiological identity).

7) Acknowledging the gifts and responsibilities that follow from baptism (baptismal identity)

8) Regular participation in the sacraments of the church, above all in the Eucharist (Eucharistic identity)

9) Experiencing that conversion and the spiritual life lead the way from a life governed by sin and lust into a state of spiritual freedom and moral perfection. The formation of exact moral criteria. (ethical identity)

10) Belief in the resurrection and the second coming of the Lord (eschatological identity).

Other features and aspects may doubtless be included in the "fundamental Christian identity" – if such a term can be employed. However, to my mind, without the aspects listed above, a Christian identity cannot be regarded as well-balanced.

Of course, in drawing up the defining traits of a Christian one cannot neglect the features that are related to the traditions of the different denominations. For example, from the Orthodox perspective, that would include the identifiers used by VCIOM in their sociological poll, such as the use of the baptismal cross etc. But it is a matter of prioritizing these features, as it is of building a hierarchy. In this hierarchical structure the fundamental features of Christianity must be carefully defined.

The "invariables" or "fundamental features" of Christian identity were shaped in the first centuries of the Church's existence. The Church took care that its members had a clear concept of what it meant to be a Christian and regard one's self as Christian. These aspects are expressed precisely and concisely for example in the Credo. Nevertheless, even during the first millennium of Christianity it was evident that there were deviations from this normative Christian identity. For example, we can recall the dubious fact that church orthodoxy became connected to the emperor's personal theological preferences, as was the case in Byzantium

from the emperor Constantine all the way to Iconoclasm, or how Christian identity was linked to other identities or how it was mixed with these, such as with Roman identity or Hellenism. It would be wrong to look to the past for some sort of golden age where Christian identity was fully realized. Nevertheless it is possible to trace the main trajectory of Christian identity. It passes through the decisions of the ecumenical councils and the writings of the Church Fathers. Even through Christian identity experienced numerous crises during the first millennium, the Church was nevertheless able to distill and preserve the identity handed down to his followers by Our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

In the second millennium, those processes by which Christianity was influenced by external factors, most notably politics, grew in strength. Thanks to these factors the second millennium became the millennium of confessional Christianity. First, Christendom was divided into east and west. This was influenced to a marked degree by political processes and the replacement of true Christian identity with political identities, primarily those associated with the Bishop of Rome.

Confessionalism was noticeably reduced during the Reformation, which is regarded by some scholars as the real inception of confessional Christianity.[123] As before, political factors had a great impact on this process. This is easy to see, e.g., in the support received by Martin Luther from the Elector of Saxony, or the even more radical role played by British monarchs starting with Henry VIII in the shaping of Anglican identity. The main feature of Anglicanism was, after all, obedience to the king's will.

In the new era an important factor was thrown into the mix of Christian identity – nationalism – which began with the formation of nation-states in the beginning of the 19th century and became key to the self-identity of many Orthodox peoples. Even though nowadays it is evident how two identities, national and religious, are often blended together in practice and produce occasionally odd forms of "religious identity". (In this case the phrase "religious identity" must, for obvious reasons, be put in quotation marks.) Nowadays the evolution of the hybrid identity of the "Orthodox nation" has led to other forms, such as "Orthodox civilization".

During modernism, different ideologies have influenced the processes that modify Christian identity. Ideological factors played a significant role in the development of the identity of the Roman Catholic Church from the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries, from the ecumenical council of Vatican I to Vatican II. The first of these

123 See R. Kolb. "Luther's function in an age of confessionalization". In *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. by D.K. McKim. Cambridge University Press, 2003. P. 209 ff.

councils reflected conservative ideological attitudes, and the latter more liberal ones. Other denominations have not been excluded from this development either. After the breakup of the Soviet Union the Russian Orthodox Church encountered the fact that many disappointed people had joined the Church, or people who were unable in the end to accept the new liberal social structure. The majority of these people did not seek out the Church because they sincerely wished to become Christians, but because they were looking for a particular ideological environment – one which would fit their accustomed world view inherited from the Soviet era. To this I would add that, at present, increasing sympathy towards communist ideology is evident in Church circles. Sometimes these sympathies take on distorted forms: some for example revere one of the worst persecutors of Christians in history, Joseph Stalin. One can also add the observation that church circles are becoming radicalized. There is an increase in fundamentalism and fanaticism which manifests as protests, direct resistance against church employees, and speeches directed against the unity of the Church. Modern fundamentalism is dualistic. It sees the entire world in black and white. Communist ideology was similarly dualistic, it also divided the world into black and white. I would connect the growing fundamentalism among members of the Russian Orthodox Church to the increasing number of supporters of dualistic ideologies, who have neither been reformed nor turned away from old modes of thinking.

This attempt to reconstruct the development of identities across different religious traditions is too formulaic. In reality, the process is very complex and requires careful analysis from, e.g., sociological or socio-psychological perspectives. Our own epoch is a time of pluralistic identities. Identities form complicated hierarchies and once formed they are susceptible to many factors, especially influence from the media. These factors also affect religious identity. Analysing their development is very important, because if these acquired identities are not made clear and at least partly opened up to the members of our churches, contemporary issues will remain unresolved. These issues include:

1) How do Christians understand themselves in the modern world? How should they regard themselves?

2) To what extent can their Christian identity exist in harmony with their other identities (e.g., social, political, cultural, national identities) and to what extent should it be kept separate?

3) How can Christians relate and adapt their own religious identity to the other religious identities which they routinely encounter in an increasingly pluralistic modern society?

These questions are very relevant now as we see the conflict of religious identities growing stronger all over the world, even in Europe. The recent terrible tragedy in Norway is an example of that. It is clear that Anders Breivik's terrible crime was motivated by a specific concept of Christian identity. The identity was undoubtedly distorted, or, more specifically, it had incorporated ideological elements. Nevertheless, many Christians, even members of different denominations, have a similar distorted identity – even if in a less obvious way. Responsibility for this in part belongs to the shepherds of the Church, who often do not take care that their parishioners develop a genuine Christian identity but sometimes even accommodate distortions of the Christian identity. If – to return momentarily to Norway – Breivik had had a correct Christian identity, the tragedy of Utøya might have been avoided.

Finally, I would like to touch one final aspect in my presentation. It is connected to a political-social phenomenon that has recently become increasingly evident in Europe, namely post-secularism. The tragedy in Norway mentioned above is connected to this phenomenon. It is clear that the category of identity plays a not-insignificant role in this phenomenon. Perhaps I am being too speculative in expressing my views, but when post-secularism is analysed using the terminology of religious identity, I would describe it as follows: secularism – as we know it now – was born in the 19th century and continued to develop to the end of the 20th century as a reaction to religious identities, even those identities that had been considerably modified with respect to fundamental Christian identity. Above all it was a matter of the political modification of different religious identities, in which the church was either made into a part of the "establishment" or in which the church served the ruling political elite and its ideology. Secular identities themselves often became modified versions of religious identities, or continuations of them, although without a specific religious component. By the present day, European secular identities had merged into a unified integral whole. But with the rise of post-secularism they once more took on religious overtones. Whereas during the dawn of secularism – the days of the Enlightenment and positivism – new secular identities were based on old religious identities, new post-secular identities are often based on old secular identities.

Even though this pattern has been simplified, it is evident that the Church's mission in these post-secular times is to separate the genuinely Christian ingredients in these emerging post-secular identities from the secular elements that have been added to them. More concretely, this task includes making clear that communist, or radically conservative fascist ideologies have no place in Christianity. People should be warned against confusing these ideologies with Christianity.

At present, therefore, the Church's most important pastoral duty is to formulate a proper Christian identity and to ensure that Christians adopt a genuine Christian identity. I am convinced that we can be guided in this task by the Holy Scriptures, the canons of the ecumenical councils and the traditions inherited from the Church Fathers. When we nurture a true Christian identity for our flock, we must rely above all on the identity of the earliest Christians. We should strive to achieve the identity found in the New Testament, the identity of Christ's disciples, who recognized Christ as their Lord and God (John 20:28) and who did everything as he taught them (1 John 3:23). A Christian identity should therefore be centered on Christ. It must also be a Eucharistic identity, after all, partaking of the Eucharist was the most important part of Christian self-identity in those early centuries. In our own time, the issue of ecclesiastical identity stands out as important. How do we understand the church we belong to? How do we see ourselves in that church? How do we relate to others who have a different ecclesiastical identity? All these questions have arisen in the contexts of interdenominational dialogues, but on the other hand they also have direct relevance to all Christians, whether they are interested in the dialogues or not. And, finally, the moral implications of Christian identity are hugely significant. How should Christians behave in their own community and society? What should their ethical stance be on social issues? What does it mean to live a Christian life? Only if we are able to answer these questions for ourselves and our members, will we be able to take on the challenge of the modern world.

THE IDEAL AND THE REALITY: COMMITMENT TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND

Bishop Seppo Häkkinen

Introduction

In this presentation I shall look at commitment to membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland from the 1960s to the 2000s. I shall first clarify what sort of commitment the church expects of its members. Secondly I shall investigate how commitment to membership happens in practice using statistics and studies carried out by the church. Finally, I shall consider what factors influence membership commitment in the tension between the ideal and reality.

Compared to many European countries, Finland is a remarkably homogeneous country in religious terms. In addition to that, the percentage of people affiliated with some religious organization is higher than average. Nevertheless, the percentage of people who are religiously unaffiliated has risen gradually. The diversity of religious options has also grown in the past few decades.

The population of Finland by religious affiliation, 1920-2010

Year	Lutherian %	Orthodox %	Other %	Unaffiliated %
1920	98,1	1,6	0,3	0,03
1940	95,9	1,8	0,3	2,0
1960	92,4	1,4	0,6	5,5
1980	90,3	1,1	0,7	7,8
2000	85,1	1,1	1,1	12,7
2005	83,1	1,1	1,2	14,6
2010	78,2	1,1	1,5	19,2

One becomes a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland through baptism. Baptism is primarily a church service, but it also has a juridical consequence: the person receiving baptism becomes a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and at the same time becomes a member of a local parish. Someone who has been baptized but has left the church can rejoin the church simply by announcing the desire to confess the faith of that church. If that person has not received catechism then he or she must attend confirmation school before joining the church.

According to church law, a member of the church is a member of the parish in his place of residence. In Finland, belonging to the church is organized along the so-called parochial principle. The entire country is divided into geographically delimited congregations and those who belong to the church are members of the local parish in the area where they reside.

Membership in the church is not a one-dimensional thing, but commitment to membership has many different aspects. In this presentation I shall concentrate on three dimensions of commitment. These are

1. Sociological commitment (commitment to church membership in the sense of belonging to the church)

2. Practical commitment (commitment to public and private devotional acts)

3. Theoretical commitment (commitment to the church's faith and doctrine)

These different dimensions of church life have undergone changes over the past few decades in Finland and in the rest of western Europe. This has been particularly noticeable since the 1960s. The question of commitment to church membership is a very topical theme.

The ideal of commitment to membership

According to the Lutheran view, the Bible is the starting point of all Christian faith and doctrine. However, the doctrine of the church cannot be appropriately explained merely by quoting passages from the Bible. This is why, when considering the ideal of commitment to church membership, it is essential to begin with the confessional writings of the Lutheran church. It is the Book of Concord (Concordia) that affirms that the Bible holds the highest authority in matters of doctrine. The Lutheran confession, along with the old Christian ecumenical

creeds (which are, after all, part of the Lutheran confession), guide and inform the interpretation of the Bible.

The core of the Bible is the gospel about Jesus Christ. The gospel is received with faith, which is trust in God's assured promise of forgiveness of sins and salvation for Christ's sake. Emphasizing the gospel as the centre of the Bible gave rise to the first Lutheran confessional writings. They became a guide for Lutheran faith and life, and thus a guide for church membership.

A confession is an expression of the church's faith and thus a crucial part of the church's life. Thus the confession of the church teaches what the church is and what it means to be a member in it. This is why it is important to start exploring commitment to church membership from the perspective of confession. The Concordia are the first documents in which the ideals of commitment to the Lutheran church have been set out.

According to the membership ideals found in the Concordia the foundation for commitment is baptism, which joins a person to the unity of the Church. As a member of a congregation, the member of the church has a connection to the tools of grace (God's word and the sacraments) through which God brings about faith and love. The membership ideal in the confessional writings expresses all three dimensions of the concept of commitment that will be used in this presentation. In order to fully be a member of the church, the three aspects of belonging to the church (sociological dimension), partaking of the gifts of grace and spiritual life (practical dimension) and confessing its faith (theoretical dimension) must all be realized.

The crucial element of the ideal of commitment expressed in the Concordia is of course connection with the church. Firstly, the actual, real church cannot be separated from the historical and empirical church, in which God works through the tools of grace. This is why church membership and partaking of salvation are inextricable. Secondly, baptism makes a person a member of the church, which simultaneously means they are made members of God's kingdom. Thus the ideal of commitment is belonging to the church. However, it must be stated that belonging to the church was obligatory at the time the confessional writings were compiled. There was no freedom of religion as we know it today. This does not, however, affect the doctrine found in the Concordia.

Belonging to the church is connected to the practical dimension of the ideal of commitment found in the confessional writings. It foremost means connection with the life of the congregation, in which the tools of God's work – the word and

the sacraments – are visible, audible and usable. Secondly, the Christian life that follows baptism binds a person to the spiritual life of the congregation. Practicing faith expands from just tending to spirituality to becoming a daily calling. Thus the ideal for commitment is participation in the life of the congregation, which broadly defined also encompasses "the liturgy of daily life".

The dimension of confessing the faith is essentially connected to baptism. Baptism promises and brings God's gift to "all those who believe in God's word and promises as they are heard". Baptism does not just have effect as an external act done without faith, but through faith. Even though faith is connected with baptism, it does not create baptism not is it a part of it. Instead, baptism creates faith, which is nourished and strengthened by participation in the spiritual life of the congregation. Thus the connection between baptism and faith emphasizes confessing faith as the theoretical dimension of ideal commitment.

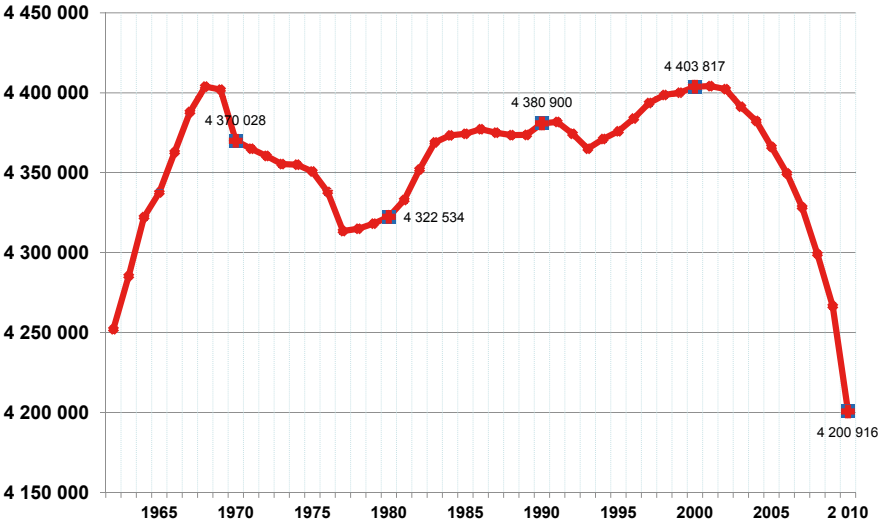
The Small Catechism written by Martin Luther in the 16th century is part of the Concordia of our Church. The ideal of commitment that it teaches has had considerable impact on the church's membership ideal, after all, the Catechism is the guideline for living as a Christian. The ideal for commitment found in the Small Catechism is the conscious grasp of the fundaments of Christian faith and the daily personal and family-based liturgical life based on prayer that derives from it. This membership ideal has been retained continuously from the Small Catechism to the latest edition of the Catechism published in 1999.

The ideal of membership commitment in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has not changed much over the past few decades. The ideal for commitment is membership in the church, knowledge of the basics of Christian faith, and the daily spiritual and Christian life that derives from them.

The reality of membership commitment

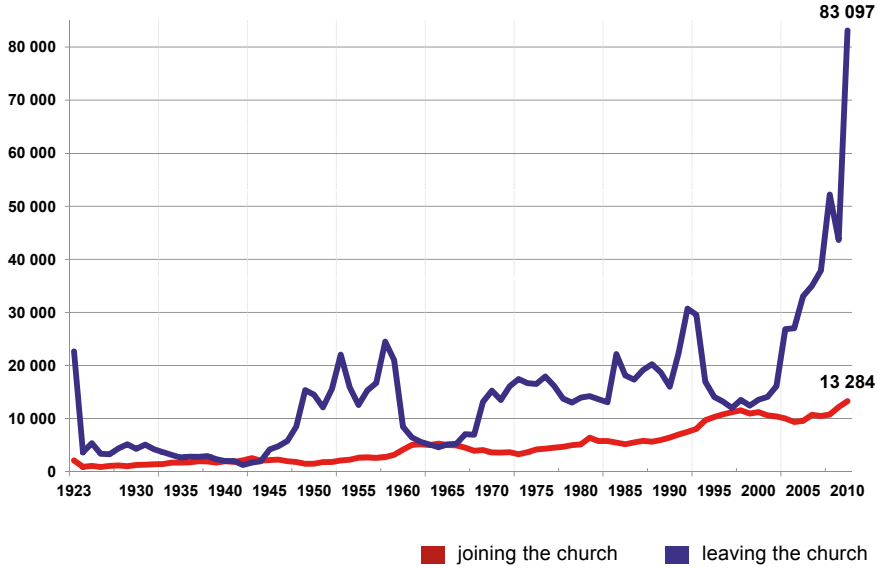
The reality of commitment to membership looks completely different from the ideal. The reality of commitment to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is mainly apparent in belonging to the church (sociological commitment). This dimension is linked to questions about joining and leaving the church, and the strength of membership.

Numbers of people belonging to the Church, 1960-2010



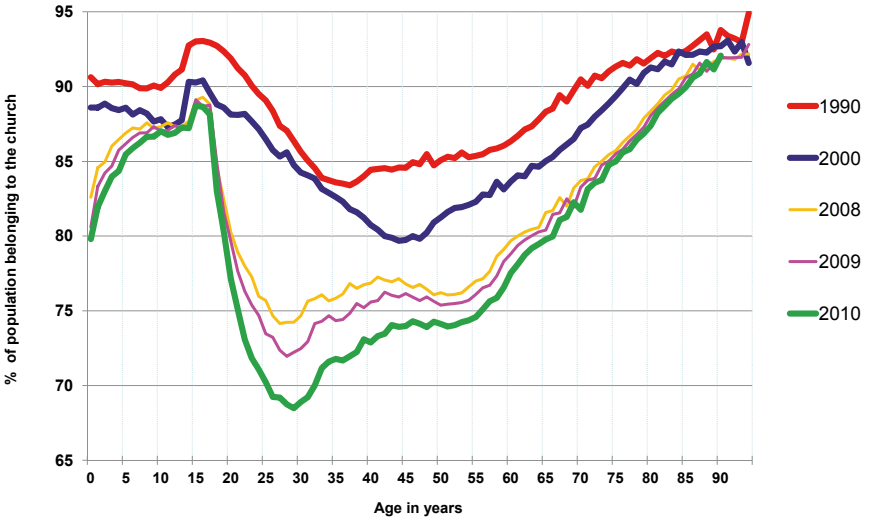
The proportion of church members to the whole population of Finland has steadily decreased. On the whole, both separating from the church and joining it have increased, but the development has oscillated. Apart from a few exceptional years, more people have left the church than have joined it. Leaving the church has increased especially in the first decade of the 21st century and has reached record levels. Nevertheless, Finland has a high percentage of church membership by international standards.

Numbers of people joining and leaving the Church 1923-2010



There are noticeable differences in the age groups of people who belong to the church. Church membership also varies according to gender, age, profession, political stance, and place of residence. The youth do not typically regard membership in the church as an important part of their Finnish way of life and culture, unlike older generations. The younger the generation, the weaker the connection.

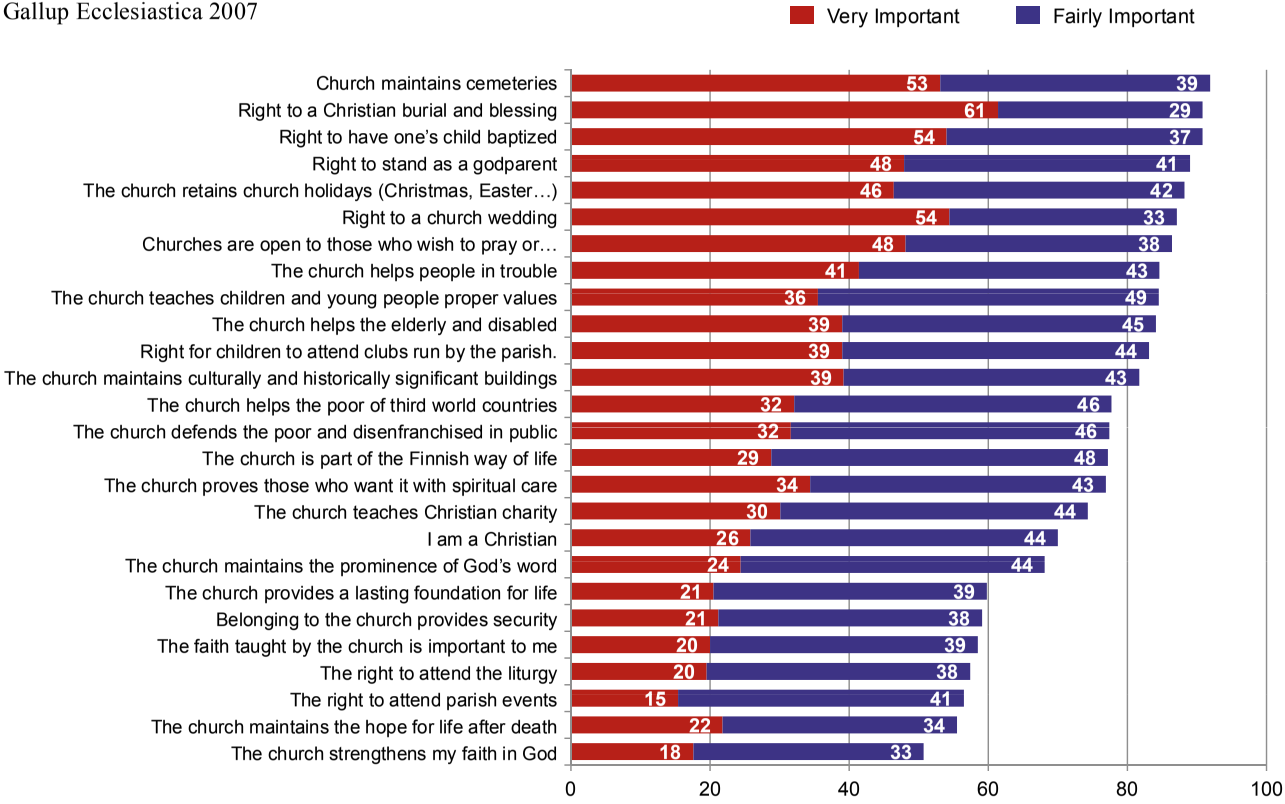
Percentage of the Finnish population who belong to the Church, broken down by age group for the years 1990, 2000, and 2010



Research has been carried out to establish what factors affirm a person's commitment to church membership. Church members remain attached to their church because of church services and factors related to these, such as the fact the church maintains cemeteries and that church membership enables one to stand as a godparent. Other key factors are diakonia and the educational mission of the church.

Poll of members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland regarding the reasons why they are Church members

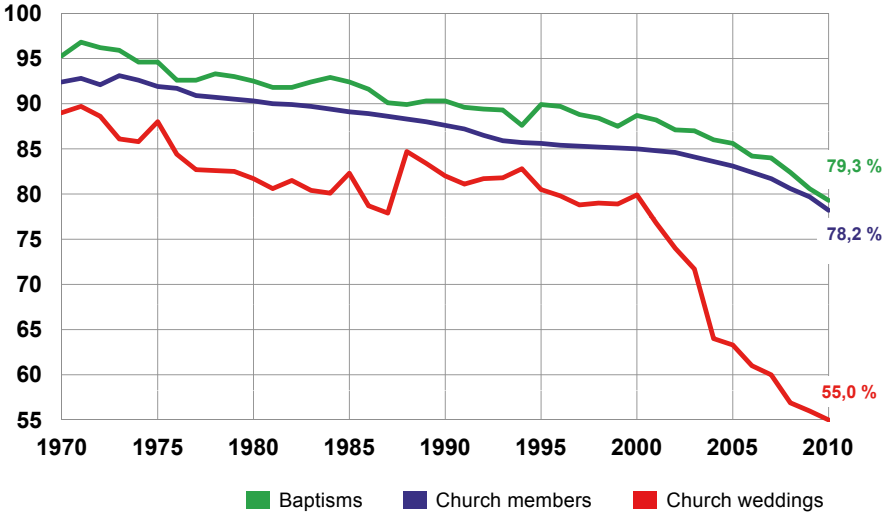
Gallup Ecclesiastica 2007



Commitment to membership has been weakened by social diversification and urbanism, as well as a rise in pluralism, individualism and privatism. The consequence of these developments is that membership in the church and the services it offers become insignificant to the individual, and the bond with the home parish is reduced to a tax, as a result the threshold for separating from the church is lowered and relinquishing membership is easy.

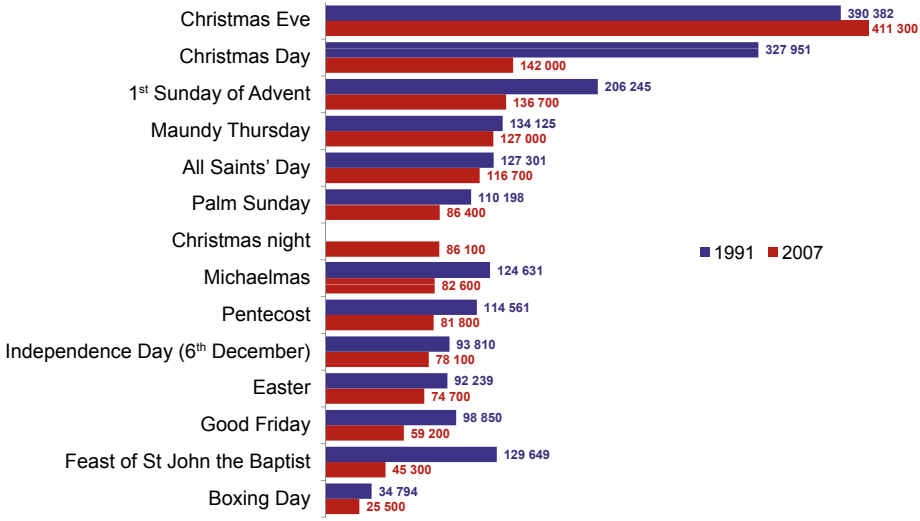
The second way in which the reality of commitment is concretized is in practising the religion (practical commitment). Practical commitment can be divided into public or institutional practise and private practise. There are different levels of public practising of the religion, i.e., participating in the church's activities, depending church activity. For example, the church reaches the broadest number of its members through occasional services. For a national church they are an important contact point to almost the whole population of Finland

Percentage of Church members, baptisms and Church weddings between 1960 and 2010



Taking part in the parish life during the holidays of the church year, in addition to occational services, is a level of commitment that gathers large numbers. On the other hand, regular participation in the liturgy, other parish activities or obligations is reduced.

Church attendance on the most popular holidays in 1991 and 2007



Many parish activities, such as the occasional services, liturgy during the biggest holidays and confirmation school, have retained their popularity. They continue to reach a large number of Finns and they are the strength of the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Additionally, some forms of activity have gained participants, such as music events and family clubs.

Comparing the participation of church members across the decades is difficult, because the entire structure of how the church operates has changed. Nevertheless, over the past few decades overall participation in church activities has declined, even though this development has not taken place uniformly across all levels. The change has not been dramatic, but gradual. On the other hand, branching out into new fields of operation has reached people who might not normally participate in the traditional activity of the church. The nature of the activity has also changed from one requiring long-term commitment to projects or one-off events. In general, the traditional aspects of practical commitment in this area have weakened and been restructured. The new forms of operating have partly involved new people and new groups. For them the dimension of practical commitment has been made stronger.

A key element of private practice of religion is prayer, in which no major changes have taken place over the last few decades. Nevertheless, the trend has been one of decline in all groups except for the one group experiencing growth: those who do not pray at all.

Prayer activity among Finns between 1982 and 2007

	1982	1986	1991	2000	2003	2007
Prays Daily	26	25	29	23	28	27
More than once a week	8	11	10	11	15	12
Rarely	28	28	29	42	34	39
Not at all in recent years	25	25	25	20	22	21
Cannot say	13	11	7	4	1	1
Total	1025	487	941	1038	1009	1030

Overall, private religious observance has remained more or less the same and hasn't weakened in the same way as public, institutional religious observance. Finnish religious observance is mainly private in nature.

The third reality of commitment is evident in the commitment to faith and doctrine (theoretical commitment). It is difficult to measure adherence to church faith. Faith is something more than a phenomenon or psychical process that can be empirically measured. Living, real, faith exists in a reality above empiricism and above reason, for which criteria for quantification cannot be set out and which research cannot reach.

A questionnaire makes it possible to glean information about people's own ideas about faith. The focal points for theoretical commitment are Finns' belief in God and in key Christian precepts. In some way, the overall number of Finns who believe in God has remained fairly stable over the past few decades. If we examine those who believe in "the God of the church" over a longer period, it is possible to observe that the theoretical dimension of commitment is in decline.

Finns' belief in God between 1976 and 2007

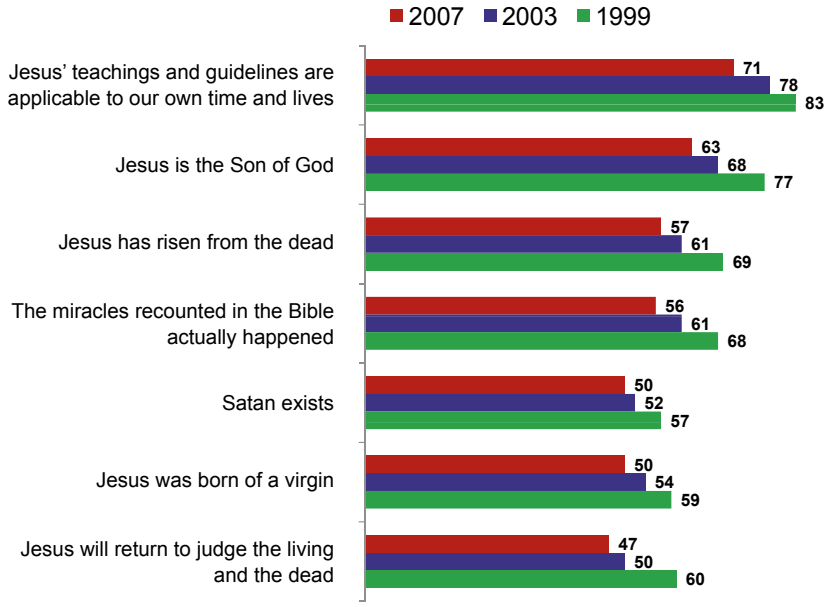
Polls carried out by Gallup Ecclesiastica (G) and Monitor (M)

	G 1976	G 1982	M 1991	M 1993	M 1995	G 1999	M 2001	G 2003	G 2007
I believe in the God of Christian doctrine	51	44	33	37	41	47	39	36	37
I believe in God, but in a different way than the Church teaches	22	23	30	30	28	27	24	28	27
I am not sure whether I believe in God or not	17	13	18	17	16	12	15	15	19
I doubt God's existence	4	4	5	7	5	5	5	5	6
I do not believe in God	5	6	8	7	10	6	8	10	11
Cannot / don't want to say	1	10	6	2	0	3	9	6	*
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Numbers	1301	1026	2007	1989	2440	992	2475	1009	1030

Belief in the key points of Christian doctrine has in some ways declined dramatically during the period under consideration.

Percentage of Finns who consider aspects of Christian doctrine to be at least likely, 1999, 2003 and 2007

Gallup Ecclesiastica (%)



The changes in attitudes towards faith in God and central Christian doctrines reveal the – sometimes considerably – weakened state of people's commitment to the content of the Christian faith. It reflects the way in which religion has become individualistic and privatized, and individuals define the object and content of their faith for themselves.

The factors influencing the tension between the ideal and reality

From the perspective of commitment to membership, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is living in a field of tension between the theological ideal and the sociological empirical reality. What are the factors influencing this tension?

The tension between the ideal and reality of commitment is affected by three factors in particular: communality, identity and contextuality.

1) Firstly, the decline of traditional communality has led to a reduction in church membership. The structural upheavals in Finnish society particularly from the 1960s onward resulted in industrialization, urbanization and increased wealth. The traditional value systems began to crumble and lifestyles diverged. More to the point, one can say that the church can no longer be in the middle of the village if the village has ceased to exist.

   The transmission of the religious tradition to the younger generations has faltered. This has meant that members of the church have less awareness about the church membership. Religion is no longer inherited as part of a religious education received from one's parents. Religion is increasingly about individuals' own quests and choices. The collective memory that bound members of the community has weakened. If everyone creates their own religion, then "the chain of religion is broken" as the French sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger has observed.

2) Secondly, the church's identity has become obscured. Modernization has led to an internal diversification within the church. Secularization has led to changes in the traditional interpretation of the Christian faith.

   There are many spiritual movements, so-called revivalist movements, that operate within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. They differ in their concepts of what the church is. The church has managed to maintain its structure as a national church, because there is so much

room for different accents within it. At the same time, however, it has lost the opportunity to define a clear identity for itself and have internal cohesion.

Developing forms of operation and expanding opportunities for participation have brought new people in on the action. This has not, however, led in all respects to a growth in participation in church activities.

3) The third factor influencing the relationship between the ideal and reality is contextuality. This refers to the tension between the unchanging message of the church and the changing environment in which it must operate, something that has increased with modern development.

"Private Christianity" challenges the message and teachings of the church. Behind it lie the increase in privatization and individualism that have characterized the past few decades. Religion has increasingly become a private matter, the content of which is defined to suit the individual.

The changes to religiosity also include a shift in focus from religiosity to spirituality. And increasing number of people identify as "spiritual" rather than "religious". According to the British sociologists of religion Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, in doing so people turn away from the Christian church and turn inward to find purpose for their lives from within themselves. People are reluctant to commit to hierarchical, omniscient institutions. They want the freedom to grow and develop their own unique person instead of going to churches and humbling themselves to their teaching.

According to the research of Kimmo Ketola, the growing spirituality of the last four decades exhibits the following traits: a clear striving for a spirituality that transcends religious boundaries, doctrinal open-mindedness, societal laxity, liberal moral values, the emphasis on the immediate and concrete rewards of religion, and individual methods for encountering the sacred. It is clear that this kind of private Christianity is a challenge to the church and its immutable fundamental message.

Membership as a challenge for the future of the Church

How can we attempt to bridge the gulf between the ideal and the reality of commitment to the church?

The changes that have taken place in religious commitment are such that membership is one of the greatest challenges facing the church in the future. At the same time, one must say that the church's primary duty is not to be concerned about the number of its members. The number of members is a result of the life of the church, not a justification for action. The main mission of the church, according to its strategy, is to call people to fellowship with the graceful God, to bring a lasting foundation to life and to encourage people to care for their neighbors and creation. Responsibility for this mission challenges the church to take the matter of membership seriously. It is a matter of how the church looks after its members, takes new members seriously, cares for those who separate from the church and how it actively strives to increase membership numbers.

Firstly, the church must care for its over 4 million members, to preserve their commitment to the church. The task is a challenging one, especially when taking into account the heterogeneity of the membership. People of very different degrees of faith and ways of life can fit into a community of that size. Reinforcing their Christian identity is crucial.

Over ten thousand people join the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland annually, some of whom have previously left the church, some are joining for the first time. They are for the most part deeply committed to their membership. Their positive reception into the fellowship of the church lays a foundation for maintaining that membership.

The primary reason given for why people choose to leave the church is that the church no longer means anything, or at least enough, to them. Maintaining a connection with those who have left the church signifies that the church is not indifferent to them. This makes a possible return to the church easier.

In Finland there are roughly a million people who are unaffiliated with any religious group. This must be seen as an opportunity for expanding membership. Christ's apostolic command to mission and witness must be taken seriously and the gospel message must be actively kept prominent and people must be called to the fellowship of the church.

The number of immigrants has risen in the last decades. The majority of them are Christians, for whom a link must be offered with a congregation. Naturally, they must be first directed towards fellowship with their own church or denomination.

The changes that have taken place in the different dimensions of commitment demonstrate that the church must take the factors that affect commitment to membership seriously.

1) Society is becoming increasingly diverse and mosaic-like, which affects traditional communities. The sociologist Bryan Wilson argues that modernization is not in itself a thread to religion, but the rise of individualism is. Because communality is one of the pillars of religion, the crumbling of communality also weakens religion's position.

   A critical question from the perspective of commitment to church membership is whether the church will be able to take into account people's individuality without losing its communal nature? Will the church be able to respond to expectations about a new sort of communality?

   The challenge for the church is to try to combine modern individuality and communality. It means creating a society where there is room for different individuals. It is important to make a distinction between the concepts of "communality" and "collectivity". Collectivity derives from the Latin *collecto* (to assemble, summon, bind together), "communality" on the other hand derives from the Latin *communico* (to take part, make common, share). A return to the old "communality" with its authoritarian and collectivist features is no longer possible. The new individualism has come to stay, so the corresponding new communality must be built on its terms. It is a matter of participation. Church members must not be and must not be allowed to be outsiders in their own church. At the same time the church must also preserve its character as a community, in order to remain a church.

2) The matter of identity is especially important for a large majority church. The sociologist of religion, Karel Dobbelaere, has observed that inner secularization is typical of many traditional dominant churches. The emphasis on the transcendence of religious communities has diminished and they have increasingly adapted to secular society. The danger in this case is the loss of identity for both the church and its members. In such cases it is expected that the church have awareness of its own special qualities and a clear identity as a church. At the same time, Christian education both at home and in the church should reinforce both the individualistic Christian identity as well as the communal one.

3) The church constantly lives in a field that introduces tension between loyalty to the immutable message and mission of the church on the one hand and the inevitable need to live in a time of social change on the other. This requires seeking new ways to exist as a church in a world that is changing ever more rapidly.

   Contextuality leads the church to consider the character of parish life, teaching and activity, as well as the church's use of language and cultural expression. "Private Christianity" poses a challenge to church theology and doctrine, but also to the worship life and its relationship to cultural life. They should be such, that modern people can find in the Christian faith the lasting and serious ingredients to construct a personal world view.

   It is not just a matter of the form taken by parish life. Contexuality is about the holistic aspect of the church's message and mission. It is about the connection of faith and love emphasized by Lutheranism. Words and deeds must be one. The scholar Aku Visala states, "The most important response to an increasingly secularized culture is not intellectual but practical. Intellectual arguments on their own rarely change anybody's mind. The challenge lies more in whether Christians will succeed in living in the world so that by their lives they represent the best Christian virtues and values. Intellectual arguments, for example, are insufficient to demonstrate that Christianity helps in formulating ethical convictions, provides motivation for moral activity and supports people's independence and intellectual development. These must be demonstrated by living: not in word and tongue, but in deeds and truth (1 John 3:18)."

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