

From the Editor

We have, in this issue of MST Review, four articles and one research notes that will, for sure, serve to further inform practices in the churches.

Thomas Mooren's research, "No Change in God's Creation! Reflections on the Concept of 'Nature' in Dialogue with Qur'ān, Sūrah 30,30", deals with Sūrah 30,30, one of the more famous Sūrates. He discusses the heart of the Islamic monotheistic faith, including the mystery of creation (*fitrah*), which could bring our attention to the creation story of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Although one gains this association of Sūrah 30,30 with the Christian narrative, a further engagement with the text leads us to this Islamic interpretation: that the original faith of humankind is the Islamic faith. Mooren's study tries to clarify this assertion and we hope that he could assist us in our conversations with Muslims.

The next article by Michael Layugan, "On the Collaboration Between Bishop Constant Jurgens, cism, of the Diocese of Tuguegarao and the Divine Word Missionaries," delves into the role of Bishop Jurgens in the establishment of the first SVD mission seminary in the Philippines and in the inauguration of SVD missionary engagement in the northern Cagayan parishes. The author makes use of various archival sources in recreating the communication between the Bishop and the SVD missionaries. These served to unravel the reasons for the SVDs taking over parishes in northern Cagayan and why the Bishop supported the establishment of Christ the King Mission Seminary in New Manila.

Alvenio G. Mozol, Jr.'s study, "Noise of Violent Human Speech and the Restraint of Contemplative Silence," covers a vital aspect of "contemplative

silence”: as context and as an end; one that “is not a mere absence of words, a type of passive protest, or a state of unspeakable suffering, but the spacious, fertile, and transfiguring ground of human speech because it is the boundless yet contingent ‘temple of divine presence’.” “Contemplative silence”, marked as a *praxis*, could also bring back the idea of a practice that is an end in itself, even if most of us would be disposed to expect utilitarian results from silence.

Marisol Navidad’s work, “The Prophetic Function of the Paraclete in our Ecclesial Life,” explores the Paraclete sayings (John 14: 17, 26; 15:26; 16: 13), and shows how the Paraclete continues to reveal to the churches the message of salvation by Jesus. As he prophesied during his earthly ministry, Jesus will continue to do so through the Paraclete who dwells in his disciples. The article argues that the Paraclete discloses the “things to come,” providing direction for ecclesial life.

With her research notes, Nicole Tilman takes up the issue of salvation for the religious ‘other’ and the salvific role of his or her religion by: 1) showing how cultural and religious pluralism brought about by globalization and migration have made this issue a pressing one; 2) reviewing the evolution of the Roman Catholic Church’s teachings concerning other religions and salvation; and 3) surveying various alternative theological positions.

Ferdinand D. Dagmang

Contents

MST Review vol. 20, no. 2 (2018)

From the Editor	v
------------------------------	---

Articles:

No Change in God's Creation! Reflections on the Concept of "Nature" in Dialogue with Qur'ān, Sūrah 30,30.....	1
<i>Thomas Mooren</i>	

On the Collaboration between Bishop Constant Jurgens, cism, of the Diocese of Tuguegarao and the Divine Word Missionaries	38
<i>Michael G. Layugan</i>	

Noise of Violent Human Speech and the Restraint of Contemplative Silence	95
<i>Alvenio G. Mozol, Jr.</i>	

The Prophetic Function of the Paraclete in our Ecclesial Life	115
<i>Mirasol C. Navidad</i>	

Research Notes:

Do "Non-Christian" Religions Have a Role in God's Salvific Plan?	153
<i>Nicole Tilman</i>	

No Change in God's Creation! Reflections on the Concept of "Nature" in Dialogue with Qur'ān, Sūrah 30,30

Thomas Mooren*

Abstract: This article deals with Sūrah 30,30, one of the better known, more famous, Sūrates of the Qur'ān. It follows this specific Sūrah's direction into the heart of the Islamic monotheistic faith, including the mystery of creation (fitrah), of humankind. One of the most important announcements of Sūrah 30,30 is that the creation mystery coincides with the instauration of the very first ritual or religion (dīn) of humankind. The next step the Sūrah takes is to reveal in whose name the process unfolds itself, namely in the name of the Prophet Ibrāhīm. His name is not mentioned by 30,30. However, the primordial ritual of prayer and adoration that emerges from the act of creation is called "hanīfan", i.e., "hanīf"-like. If there is one person in the Qur'ān who presents itself as a "hanīf", it is Ibrāhīm the monotheist. Once this is established, the Sūrah does not leave any doubt that the original faith of humankind is the Islamic faith. In other words, that every human being is born as a Muslim. Obviously, this differs from the Christian viewpoint that puts into the center of creation the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Keywords: creation (fitrah), monotheism, faith, Ibrāhīm, revelation, religion (dīn)

♦ Born in Germany, Dr. Theol. Thomas Mooren, OFMCap, dipl. EPHE (History of Religions), ELOA (Oriental Languages) and EA (Anthropology [Sorbonne]), until 2016 Professor at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada; former Director of Mission studies and interreligious dialogue, invited professor in Indonesia, India, Germany, Washington and Rome. He is now working in PNG and the Philippines (Maryhill School of Theology, Quezon City; DWIMS, Tagaytay). Among his numerous publications are: *Purusha. Trading the Razor's Edge Towards Selfhood* (Delhi, 1997; on Islamic and Hindu Mysticism), *The Buddha's Path to Freedom* (MST, 2004; Introduction into Buddhism) and *Missiologie im Gegenwind* (Wien, Berlin, 2012; on Interreligious Dialogue).

MST Review 20 no. 2 (2018): 1-37

2 • Reflections on the Concept of “Nature”

Turn your face towards the true religion, the religion of Ibrahīm. This is the creation according to the pattern on which He has made humankind. There is no change in God’s creation. This is the only true religion, but most people don’t know it. (*Sūrah, 30,30*).

Vulnerati sumus ingredientes mundum.
(We are wounded when entering the world)
[Robert of St. Victor]

Introduction

We live in a time that values, above all, authenticity and the virtues that come with it. Thus authenticity leads to this other cherished concept of our time: *nature*. While our real life-space, phenomenologically speaking our “Lebens-Welt” (Husserl) becomes more and more digitalized and soon will be handed over to *AI*, the artificial intelligence of robotic machinery – “nature” in lifestyle (yoga classes), eating habits (bio-food, etc.) and in certain religious experiences emerge as a priceless, and yet often, in real money, very costly, counter-value. As for religions, this trend has already been noticed and brilliantly interpreted, over hundred years ago, by William James. Everywhere in Europa and America, so James, “we see the ground laid for a new sort of religion of Nature, which has entirely displaced Christianity from the thought of a large part of our generation.”¹

Yet, what “nature” are we talking about? Not for nothing A. Borghini calls nature “one of the most ill defined (ideas)”². What has our idea of nature still to do with the Aristotelian *physis*? For Aristotle *physis* (φύσις) is basically growth and thus *movement*, either out of itself or thanks to an outer force (as in the case of

¹James, 104/5.

²1IN, 1/3 (IN=Internet; see bibliography, plus indication of page).

art). Furthermore, a movement with the goal of “being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily”³ in its nature, “by reason of itself and not accidentally.”⁴ Nature provides the place where *being* has arrived at home, has arrived at its point of destiny and is at peace with itself.⁵

This “peace”, however, has long been lost, since mathematics took over as the sole valid representation of *nature*. Such a takeover was apparently justified by the fact that mathematics could be translated into *technique*, thus rendering, by the same token, any idea of a meaningful *telos* in nature’s action superfluous.⁶ What had begun with Cusanus,⁷ Giordano Bruno⁸ and others has finally grown into the impressive tree of our modern scientific world view with its multiple branches of specialized sciences.⁹

As long as the human being thinks, it also thinks about itself, from humble beginnings up to the contemporary explosion of “human sciences”. Suffice to mention here, in a paper on “nature”, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1753-1778).¹⁰ Hence more than with every-

³2IN, 1/8 (Aristotle, *Physics* 192b21)

⁴3IN, 5/10.

⁵Cf. too 4IN, 5/9: “Aristotle believed that change was a natural occurrence. He used his philosophy of form and matter to argue that when something changes you change its properties without changing its matter.”

⁶For the development of modern science and the abolishment of teleology see, for example, Spaemann, 102; 4IN, 5/9; 2IN, 14/8; Koyré, 286/7, etc.

⁷His cosmos is no longer the medieval one, but not yet the infinite universe of modern sciences. Cf. Koyré 36.

⁸His universe was already eternal, infinite and always changing. Cf. Koyré, 65.

⁹For details see again Koyré’s study on the universe; also Spaemann, e.g. 102-125, 165-215.

¹⁰See 5IN, 1/35-2/35 and 1/3-6/6. – On the problem of “human sciences” as such see too Mooren, Freedom... .

body else, also for a greater public, his writings, ideas and life are linked with the idea of *nature*, more precisely of *nature* and the human person’s freedom.¹¹ In sum, as the case of Rousseau already shows, “nature” is not an easy idea to handle, in particular when it concerns us, the human beings. And this shows itself again in a specific dramatic way, when we turn toward theology.

“Nature” is certainly one of the most central concepts in theology – salvation, christology, incarnation, ecclesiology, heaven, hell and grace – you name it – they all “need” *nature*. Almost every important topic in theology touches this mysterious item. For sure, this is done differently in different ages. The nature-freedom-grace-question presents itself differently with St. Augustine¹² than with any theologian of today in a post-enlightenment, post-modern, (post)secularized society and so forth.¹³

However, in this paper, trying to enter into dialogue with Sūrah, 30,30 of the Qur’ān, I would like to concentrate on “nature” and creation. I mean by that, concentrate on the moment when everything began, the *ictus condendi* (Augustine), the moment of “Ur-Nature”, of pristine, primordial matter; the very moment that saw creation of the world and of us humans the way the Book of Genesis saw it.

¹¹See for this also the detailed study by Spaemann, 165-187 on the ambiguity of the concept of nature in the 18th century. As Spaemann points out with regard to Rousseau, the whole civilization process is as much a liberation *of* nature (a letting free of nature) as it is also a liberation *from* nature (a setting oneself free from nature); *ibid.*, 168. See too 5IN, 2/3.

¹²See the recent study by Brown on Augustine, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 359-368, 473/4, etc. See also Brox, 140/1; Franzen, 90-93.

¹³For the challenges of theology today see e.g. Biser, *Wende*; *idem*, *Gleichnisse* and *idem*, “Zur Freiheit...”; cf. too Mooren, *The Challenge...*

In other words, the purpose is not to develop any new cosmology, any new scientific theory about the beginning of cosmos and humankind. Rather the purpose is to show how religions – in our case Islam and Christianity – “fill up” so to speak the creation story thanks to *their own* theological tools and preconceptions. Put differently, *how they claim for themselves* the beginning of everything based upon their own theological impulse and vocation.

Context and Text of Sūrah, 30

The centerpiece of our investigation will be verse 30 of the 30th Sūrah of the Qur’ān. The Sūrah is called *ar-rūm*, the Romans, i.e., Byzantium. The name appears in v.1 of the Sūrah: “ghulibat ar-rūm”, the “Roman Empire”, Byzantium has been defeated. It means that the Coranic message is entering in or being confronted with the “great history”, the world history. The point of entrance is the defeat of Heraclius against the Sāsānians of Persia in the second decade of the 7th century. This event resulted in the total loss of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt (the fall of Damascus in 613, of Jerusalem in 614).¹⁴ However, what looks like a totally

¹⁴To see in v. 1 a reference to a Byzantine defeat depends on the reading (vocalization) of the verb ghalaba [to conquer; Wehr, 680; note: the transcription of Arabic terms throughout this paper has been simplified]. If, as it seems to make more sense, ghalaba is to be read in the passive voice (ghulibat, has been defeated), then v. 3 has to be read sayaghlibūna = they will be victorious. This is the reading adopted here, following Paret, Kommentar, 388; also Yusuf Ali, Shakir, Blachère, The Noble Qur’ān of the King Fahd Complex; the *Al-Qur’ān al-karīm* (Cairo, Dar al-mushaf); etc. (Blachère ad.loc also offers the opposite reading, which makes less sense: Byzantium is first victorious and will then be defeated). At any rate vv. 1-4 imply, if one follows the traditional chronology of the life of the Prophet, that Sūrah 30 was revealed when the Muslim community was still not victoriously established – hence the famous hijra, the flight of

disastrous situation for Byzantium will turn around – Heraclius will start an offensive in 622 that will end with a decisive defeat, this time of Persia.

That Byzantium, against all the odds, would be victorious (v. 3), already after few years” (v. 4), is a prophecy of God, since *only He* knows the secrets of history – because He makes it! The events in history are His decision (al-amr) for the past and for the future (v. 4). If the followers of the Prophet will rejoice that day (v. 4), since *pagan* Persia will be defeated, they should, however, not forget, who is behind all this: God, who helps whom He will (v. 5), God, who is at the same time the powerful *and* the merciful (al-‘azīz al-rahīm, v. 5). Whatever happens is a promise of God (wa’d Allah) and what He has promised, He keeps (la yukhlifu Allah wa’dahu, v. 6). However, most people don’t understand it (v. 6).

This is important. Since what they don’t understand, captured as they are only by what they “see”, by the “outside” of the world’s life (zāhiran min al-hayawati al-dunyā, v. 7), is the fact that thanks to these few opening lines of Sūrah, 30, we have all the ingredients necessary for a true *salvation history*! Change is not denied, since change is the essence of history, and neither is salvation, since God holds it all in His hands, according to His promise.¹⁵ It makes sense to keep this in mind,

the Prophet from Mekka to Medina took place only in the year 622. In other words, at the moment of the revelation of Sūrah 30, some enemies of the Prophet could still hope for a turnaround thanks to events outside of Arabia. (See Yusuf Ali, Introd. into Sūrah 30, p. 1049).

¹⁵See Wielandt, 20, that for Muhammad “all history (is) revelation”, and that revelation makes “history significant” (my transl., ThM). Wielandt, 19/20, also refers explicitly to Sūrah, 30. See too for possibilities and difficulties for a construction of salvation history in Islamic theology idem, 52/3, 68, 97, 151, etc. See too the study by Irabi, 16-23.

since in v. 30 of the same Sūrah we will be confronted with a position that does not seem much to be in favor of history as such, of its changing nature, that is. For now, our Sūrah proceeds with a giant jump immediately toward the end of history, salvific or not – i.e., the day of final judgement (v. 8).

Indeed, people should have known what was coming, if they had thought carefully about the other side of the world, about “the end” of things (akhirat, v. 7). Then they would have known that things are not what they seem to be, autonomous independent entities, but rather that they are all *created* (v. 8). Furthermore, from the fact of creation they then would have concluded that the one capable of creating a first time would also be able to create a second time (v. 11) – a standard argument of the Qur’ān, also found in the Bible! In other words, creation calls for *re-creation*, for the “end-time”, the “final hour”. That is the hour of judgement (v. 8), when the guilty ones will be full of despair (yublisu: “struck dumb with despair” [Yusuf Ali]; “frappées de mutisme” [Régis Blachère]). This will again be affirmed in v. 27: He is the one who creates for a first time [“begins” the creation, yabda’u al-khalq] and then repeats it [thuma yu’iduhu] at the day of resurrection. For us humans this seems to be an impressive act of power, to be able to do it twice, yet for God that is easy [huwa ahwan ‘alayhi]. Such is His power *and* wisdom [wa huwa al-‘azīz al-khakīm].

It is the same wisdom that not only creates and recreates the world, makes the world stable through regulating lightning and rainfall (vv. 24/5) – but which is also at work when it comes to populate the earth with human beings, males and females; something that must have been done (vv. 20/1) before God could call them to come out of their tombs at the day of resurrection (when He calls you with a loud voice out of the earth, thuma

idza da’kun da’watan min al-ardh). About humanity (males and females) we learn this:

v. 21) Among His signs (ayat) is this: that He has created you from dust (earth, turab). And then – behold you are human beings scattered (far and wide, basharun tantashirūna).

v. 22) And among His signs is also: that He created for you wives (azwaj) out of your own “substance” (min anfusikum) that you may dwell in tranquillity with them (litaskunū ilayha). And He has put love and mercy between you, man and wife (wa ja’ala bainakum mawaddatan wa rahmatan). Verily in that are signs for those who reflect.¹⁶

Furthermore, we are reminded that God not only created heaven and earth, but with them also the multitude of languages and “species” (“colors”, v. 22). Also, that the human beings are gifted with night and daytime perceptions, the night for sleep and the daytime for work (v. 23). We are then reminded that to God belongs everything in heaven and on earth and that all beings are *obedient* to Him (v. 26).¹⁷ To call upon obedience as the irreplaceable manifestation of true piety seems absolutely necessary, since (v. 28) some people seem to have given associates (shuraka’) to the One God – as partners in power and might. They thus committed the sin of *shirk*, polytheism.

Evidently, polytheism is thought out by people who are not capable of *correct* reasoning (they are out of

¹⁶For the translation see Yusuf Ali’s (slightly changed) translation.

¹⁷“Qanata”, to be obedient, submissive, humble and “qunūt”, obedience, humility, piety [Wehr, 792]. In this line of piety there are people who will not forget the ritual prayers (vv. 17/8) in praise of God’s power to revive what is dead (or to do the opposite), thus to revive the earth, when no life would be found on earth. In sum, again an argument that God is capable of performing the general resurrection (v. 19).

their mind, bighairi ʿilmin [v. 29]), unable to decipher the signs (in history) and the verses (ayat) of the sacred messages (cf. v. 28). The situation of these people is hopeless, nobody will help them when they need help, at judgement day for example, since, according to v. 29, it is *God himself* who made them go astray: “But who will guide those whom God leaves astray?” (fa man yahdī man asalla Allah?¹⁸)

In any case, it is right here, at this place in the text, that v. 30 appears, like a clap of thunder or a single beat of the drum! Paret calls v. 30 (together with vv. 31 and 32) “isolated verses”¹⁹. However, “isolated verses”, i.e., verses not connected to what precedes nor to what follows, should not come as a surprise on the Coranic level. The Qurʾān, “direct speech of God, [is] on the level of topics not unified and does in no way – contrary to the Gospels – comprise a continuous suite of actions.”²⁰ Add to this that Coranic verses are usually open to a vast range of interpretations.²¹ In some mystical circles up to 60000 interpretations of one verse are taken for possible!²² Thus, the “isolation” of v. 30 (and vv. 31/2) does not constitute an insurmountable problem, in particular if we take also into account that in v. 31 right

¹⁸Read the “s” in asalla as emphatic “s”. – Obviously this is a verse in favor of “predestination” which poses a theological problem whose discussion would lead us far beyond the limited scope of our present investigation.

¹⁹Kommentar, 391: “Die Verse... stehen... isoliert.”

²⁰Kermani, 216 [my transl. ThM]. Not only that. Even contradictions are “allowed” under the umbrella of the theory of abrogation (naskh, see Wehr, 961) the replacement of some verses by better ones: “And when We change (baddalna) a verse of the Qurʾān in place of another – and Allah knows best what He sends down – they, the disbelievers say: ‘(Muhammad) you are but a liar.’” (v. 16, 101) [transl. The Noble Qurʾan] See too Sūrah 2, 106 and 22, 52.

²¹See too Kermani 121-170.

²²Cf. Kermani 137.

at the beginning, some words probably have been lost!²³

At any rate, if v. 30 gives the impression to be “outstanding” or even in contradiction to the rest of the Sūrah, the art of interpretation should be easily capable of smoothing the edges. This is all the more feasible, since the rest of Sūrah 30, vv. 33-55, do develop only very few *new* topics – vv. 33-37, e.g., call for repentance and gratitude for God’s gift together with a right life style under “monotheistic rule”; vv. 38/9 deal with the problem of poverty and how to deal with the question of interest in business; v. 47 mentions predecessors to the Prophet Muhammad that have been sent with clear “proof” (bil-bayyinati) to their respective peoples.²⁴ In sum, if one aims at smoothing the edges one only has to point toward the two main topics dealt with so far: creation and the day of judgement. Like a “leitmotiv” in an opera these two themes constitute the profile of whole Sūrah 30.

a) dīn

Sūrah, 30,30 begins with a command, aimed at the Prophet and through him at all Muslims (and humankind):

Turn your face toward (the) religion (fa aqim wajhaka lil-dīni).

This clearly is a position of payer, or more generally speaking, of a mind which is on a search – for God? Which God? The meaning of life? Can religions, can any

²³See Paret, Kommentar, 391.

²⁴Those, however, committed the sin (ajramū) of not believing and became object of God’s revenge (fa intaqamn), while the believers received God’s help (kana haqqan ‘alayna nasru al-mu‘minīna) (v. 47).

religion still be part of such a search? Yet, that is what is proposed: look out for a “dīn”! In Hebrew the same root gives the meaning of judgement, law, discernment.²⁵ In Arabic we rather have for dīn “religion, creed, faith, belief”²⁶. Yet, the origin of dīn as “religion” points toward “dana”, “to borrow..., to be a debtor, be indebted; to owe s.th.”²⁷ That is, the term dīn “conveys an entire group of meanings related to the idea of debt.”²⁸ And what could be the human being’s greatest debt with regard to God? Under the title “The Pious Slave of God” the same text (8IN) answers: “In Islam the most important debt that the human being owes to God is that of his or her existence.”²⁹ The realization of such a great gift on the part of God – given that dīn clearly points toward a reciprocal relationship between God and the human being – provokes in the heart of the “anthropos” the feeling of responsibility: reciprocity and responsibility going together:

Who is the one who will lend to God a goodly loan, which God will double to his credit and multiply many times?
(Sūrah 2, 245)

or:

Verily we will ease the path to salvation for the person

²⁵See 7IN, 1/3 and 2/3; see too Ennery, 45, where we learn for dīn “judgement, droit, jurisprudence”.

²⁶See 7IN, 2/3, which even gives “ascendency, sovereignty, dominion”, to name some from a long list. See too 6IN, 1/6-4/6 and Wehr, 306, furthermore see too the Oxford Dictionary of Islam, 68, that mentions for dīn: “way” as much as “obedience”, “judgement”, “reward”.

²⁷Wehr, 305.

²⁸8IN, 1/20. See too for “dīn” the Oxford Dictionary of Islam, 68: “Way of life for which humans will be held accountable and recompensed accordingly on the Day of Judgement.”

²⁹8IN, 3/20.

who gives out of fear of God and testifies to the best. But we will ease the path to damnation for the greedy miser who thinks himself self-sufficient and rejects what is best. (Sūrah 92, 15-10).³⁰

All in all we can say that the concept of dīn clearly has an Islamic flavor; that, according to the recipients of the Coranic message what is meant by dīn is *Islamic monotheism*. As such, then, dīn finally says faith *and* shariah together!³¹ For dīn, fath, and shariah, the way, it can be said:

Don't turn your face to any other direction after you have accepted this way of life. Then you should think like a Muslim and your likes and dislikes should be of a Muslim. Your values and standards should be the one set by Islam and your character and conduct should bear the stamp of Islam, and the affairs of your individual and collective life should be ordered according to the way taught by Islam.³²

The metaphor of the pious slave says it all: “The total submission to God is what is meant by the term Islam.”³³ And again in terms of reciprocal purchase: “Verily, God has purchased from the believers their persons and possessions in return for paradise... So rejoice in the sale of yourself which you have concluded, for it is the supreme achievement.”³⁴ However, what text 8IN does not mention is the fact, that part of “being

³⁰Quoted in 8IN, 4/20; cf. too 8IN, 2/20.

³¹Cf. 7IN, 2/3.

³²9IN, 6/10= Tafsīr Maududi; Sūrah 30,30. Maududi (1903-1979), Reformer and Fundamentalist, who played a main role in the politics of Pakistan. See Sourdél/Sourdél, 552. For his extreme views and fundamentalist Islamism see too Platti, 243-251, in particular 245/6.

³³8IN, 3/20.

³⁴Sūrah 9,111; transl. 8IN,3/20; al fauz=victory, attainment, accomplishment [Wehr, 732], Paret, Koran, ad. loc. has “(grosses) Glück (“happiness”)”.

purchased by God”, means – as the same verse 111 also states – that one has to fight for God, i.e., either “to kill or to be killed”!³⁵ That sounds brutal, but isn’t this part of slavehood? It is true, however, that text 8IN – rightly feeling that “being a slave to anyone, even God, is difficult to accept” (8IN, 3/20) – tries to downplay the hardship of slavery by pointing out that a slave in the 7th century is not the same as a modern slave: “slavery was a more complex phenomenon...”³⁶

However, there is no easy escape road from the fact that slavery, being a slave, including the psychological degradation such a state includes, plays also on the Coranic level a substantial role in arguing in favor of *monotheism*, including the Islamic dīn. Thus in 30, 28, two verses before the famous 30,30, we are confronted with the following argumentation:

God has prepared for you a parable taken from your own life-situation. Do you have among your property, i.e., your slaves, those who share in the goods We have bestowed upon you, the free people, so that you two were equal regarding your possessions? This with the result that you would now have to be afraid of the slaves [because they now would be your partners sharing the same amount of property] in the same way as you free people would have to be afraid of one another! This is unthinkable! In the same way it makes no sense at all, if you associate your idols as alleged partners

³⁵“They fight (yuqatilūna) in His Cause [on the path of God: fī sabīl Allah] and slay and are slain (fayaqtulūna wa yuqtalūna)”. (transl. Yusuf Ali). And Yusuf Ali comments: “... God takes man’s will and soul and his wealth and goods, and gives him in return everlasting Felicity. Man fights in God’s Cause and carries out His will, the Universal Will. All that he has to give up is the ephemeral things of this world, while he gains eternal salvation...”. ad loc, p. 474, nr. 1361.

³⁶8IN, 3/20 and: “In early Christianity the Apostles of Jesus were called ‘slaves of God’” (8IN, 3/20).

with the one God.³⁷

A better description of “Wall Street” would not be possible. There is greed and then there is automatically fear among greedy equals. Polytheism, however, would mean exactly this: God surrounded by equals who are all motivated by the same greed and fear which would mean total chaos in heaven and the governance of the world. Not only that! The potential partners of the free “capitalists” are all (ex)slaves. In short, nobody in his or her healthy mind would let slaves share his or her possessions (i.e., to free slaves from slavery), because *then* one would have to be afraid of them. It is true that using the harsh reality of the time (slavery, greed, fear, etc) in a theological parable is not the same as sanctioning such a reality. Far from it!³⁸ Nevertheless the “mental essence” or aura the parable is impregnated with has the tendency also to “invest”, so to speak, the aura of the topic (in our case monotheism and “religion”) one wants to elucidate thanks to the simile.

Yet, whatever the worth of slavery might be as a simile for our relationship with God – it is clear by now that the kind of *dīn* we have to embrace can only be the Islamic-monotheistic one. Therefore, Paret is right in his translation to add in parenthesis: the “only true one” as adjective to “religion”³⁹, since that is Islam for the Muslims. The Coranic text makes this clear by specifying, thanks to the term “*hanīfan*”, that *dīn*, including the whole operation of turning one’s face, should be done “*hanīf-like*”. The meaning of *hanīf* is debated. It seems

³⁷Free transl. after Paret, Koran.

³⁸See Sūrah 24, 33 on setting free slaves by means of a letter (kitab) of emancipation and also Sūrah 90, 13-17, where freeing a slave is called to take “the steep road” (*‘aqaba*) that leads to paradise.

³⁹“... die (einzig wahre) Religion”, Paret, Koran, ad.loc.

that the originally somewhat negative connotation of the term, pointing to something “not quite straight”,⁴⁰ a kind of “dissidence”,⁴¹ has been turned around by the Qur’ān into the most positive qualification possible, namely that “hanīf” is to be read as “monotheist”. Hence many translate “hanīf” in this way, while others keep it as “hanīf” in the text or circumscribe it with adverbs like “steady” and “truly”.⁴² Only one thing is sure: the Qur’ān declares Ibrāhīm to be neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a Hanīf (Sūrah 3,67), clearly meaning a Muslim and not a polytheist.⁴³

In sum, we do know at this stage that we are dealing with the one, true Islamic monotheistic religion, incarnated, so to speak, by the Prophet Ibrāhīm. The next question is, what more can we learn about the “nature” or the “essence” of this monotheism. Thus the Sūrah goes on: (this is) “God’s fitrah according to the pattern on which He has made (fatara) humankind”. Here we encounter the key term *fitrah* (verb *fatara*), which is in our context as intriguing as the term *dīn*.

⁴⁰For the root *hnp* see Syriac “godless”, Hebrew “perverse”, Aramaic “deceitful”, Ugaritic “without piety”.

⁴¹Meaning a group of people that did not adhere to the official polytheistic culture, but rather practiced a kind of a-confessional monotheism.

⁴²See Yusuf Ali, ad loc: “Set then our face steadily and truly to the faith”. Yusuf Ali comments: “Here ‘true’ is used [for Hanīf] in the sense in which we say, ‘the magnetic needle is true to the north’.” 11IN, 1/2 has: “turn your face single mindedly to the true faith”; the King Fahd version of The Noble Qur’an reads: “set your face towards the religion (of pure Islamic monotheism) Hanīf (worship none but Allah alone)...”; 10IN, 3/7= Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr (1300-1373; hanbalite school in Syria under the Mamluks [see Sourdél/Sourdél 369]) has: “the religion of Ibrāhīm”.

⁴³“Wa lakin kana hanīfan musliman wa kana min al-mushrikīna.” – For the whole question see also my discussion in “I do not adore”, 62-65; idem Macht, 32, 44, note 42, idem “Unity in Diversity”, 89, note 40. See furthermore Monneret, 213, regarding Sūrah 6, 161 and 12IN, 2/6; 13IN. 1/2; 14IN, 1/2-2/2.

b) fitrah

The dictionary gives for the verb “fatara”: to split, cleave, break apart; for “fatr”: crack, rupture and for “fitrah”: creation, nature, disposition, innate character, instinct, temperament.⁴⁴ In our context it means both: creation *and* nature or nature *as* creation. That the connotation of “breaking”, “producing a rupture” is used for “creation” (He created, fatara...) is not surprising, if we take into account the specific kind of creation the Sūrah has in mind, namely the very first one, the pristine, primeval, primordial one, the “ur-creation” and thus “ur-nature” of the very first beginning. It is noteworthy that the same idea of *creation as fracture* is also expressed in the Bible, thanks to the verb “bara”, the second word of the story of Genesis and thus of the whole Bible.⁴⁵

God’s creation is “breaking open” life in a “one time action” of will and power, different from creation mythology of the non-monotheistic religions. The fitrah is not transferable into any kind of *mythological* discourse. It is the “ictus condendi”, the creation thrust (Augustine) and quite the opposite to any lengthy theogonical speculation via sexual co-production or any other kind of manipulation of already existing matter. On the other side, the purpose of myth-formation is nicely expressed by a Navaho Indian: “Knowing a good story will protect your home and children and property. A myth is just like a big stone foundation – it lasts a

⁴⁴See Wehr, 719/20; see too Encyclopedia, 179: Fitrah “signifies the manner in which all things are created by God.” Furthermore see The Qur’ān: an Encyclopedia, 210: Fitrah is the “natural disposition or inclination for something...” and also, *ibid.*, 211, that fitrah stands for “... inner nature, moral constitution and suitability”. See too 15IN, 1/2; 16IN, 1/1; 17IN, 1/10. (The “t” in “fitrah” is the emphatic “t”).

⁴⁵See Ennery, 29 and Biblia Hebraica, Kittel.

long time.”⁴⁶

It is true that the Bible story, for example, is not yet totally free from mythological slag, but a giant first step in the anti-mythological direction is made by subordinating creation under the total dominion of God’s *word* – He spoke and it was (*kūn*).⁴⁷ The highpoint and purest form of this current of thinking obviously can be found in the theory of the *creatio ex nihilo*, the “creation out of nothing”! Thomas Aquinas: “creare est aliquid ex nihilo facere”.⁴⁸

It has become clear that “nature” (Ur-nature, primordial nature) as part of God’s creation (or primordial creative power) – that *fitrah* and *fatara* do not belong to the realm of “physics”⁴⁹ nor to the realm of “meta-physics”⁵⁰ *in the sense* that they are not creatures *depending* on these two scientific realms, physics and metaphysics, although both these sciences have submitted creation to their own criteria, as finally the theory of the “creation out of nothing” demonstrates best. Hence, what I really want to say is that we should consider *fitrah* (and *fatara*) as authentic, autonomous *theological* construction! The question then arises regarding the purpose of such a construction. The

⁴⁶See Mooren, *Macht*, 87; *ibid.*, 87, on myth as production of stability, comparable to the building of dams – the dams being the mythical stories (the mythical speech) themselves. – For theogony, polytheism and mythological speculation see Mooren, *Macht*, 87-117, in part. 90, 91-94, 104/5 and *idem*, “Making the Earth”, 93-215, furthermore cf. Blumenberg, *Höhlenausgänge*, 225 and *idem*, *Arbeit*, 145, note 9.

⁴⁷This problem is discussed in Mooren, *Macht*, 101-105.

⁴⁸For the quotation of Thomas Aquinas see Mooren, *Macht* 103.

⁴⁹For “physical”, “scientific” research into nature (*tabī’ah*) by Muslim scholars in classical times see e.g., Wüstenfeld, *Dunlop*, 204-250, Mooren, *Macht*, 260-268.

⁵⁰See e.g., Averroes’ *Aristotle-Commentary* (Averroes [Ibn Rushd]: *tafsīr ma ba’d at-tabī’ah* (=commentary of “what is behind physics [nature]”, i.e., “metaphysics”); see also Badawi, Averroes, etc.

answer lies in the insertion of the human being (an-nas) into the centre of this imposing building. It is a construction built upon a triple equation: fitrah (nature) with humankind, humankind with Ibrāhīm and Ibrāhīm with (the true Islamic) religion dīn. The construction of meaning, the theological discourse, can circulate from fitrah to dīn or from dīn to fitrah – yet, always it passes via Ibrāhīm through an-nas, humankind. In other words, there is no human being that is not solidly grounded on *both sides*, on the side of fitrah and on the side of dīn! Furthermore, since fitrah and dīn on the Coranic level are identical with Islam (the faith and practice of Ibrāhīm), the consequence can only be this: every human being is a Muslim, is a believer, by nature, i.e., *by virtue of birth!*

“According to Islamic theology human beings are born with an innate inclination of tawhīd (=monotheism).”⁵¹

“Every person, whether young or old, educated or illiterate, rich or poor, strong or weak, urban or rural, dense or bright, believes, in accordance with their fitrah, that there is no god but Allah, the One.”⁵²

“... fitrah is associated with the dīn of Islam. Since Allah’s fitrah is engraved upon the human soul, mankind is born in a state in which tawhīd (=monotheism) is integral.”⁵³

Thus, everybody is born a Muslim. Yet, as if this

⁵¹15IN, 1/2.

⁵²18IN, 1/6

⁵³17IN, 2/10; 18IN, 1/6. Al-Ghazzālī (1058-1111), mystic, theologian, jurist and (anti)philosopher [See Sourdél/Sourdél, 312/13] has similar thoughts, here quoted by Wensinck, 44: “In fitrah, each heart is predisposed to know the reality of things, in spite of individual differences. Since the heart is a divine and noble thing. At the beginning the heart of each human being is predisposed toward faith and capable of believing.” (My transl. of Wensinck, ThM).

statement would not yet be sufficient, as if “Muslim by birth” would not be enough, a mythical pre-birth assurance is added, so that the human being really undergoes the process of a “double bind”. We are thrown back into a kind of pre-time, just after Adam’s fall, when all human beings still to be born took part, near Mekka, in a pact (mithaq), between themselves and the One God. Sūrah 7,172/3:

172) “When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam – from their loins (min zuhūrihim) – their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): ‘Am I not your Lord (alastu birabbikum)’? – They said: ‘Yea! We testify (bala shahidna)’. This lest ye should say on the day of judgement: ‘Of this we were never mindful (inna kunna ‘an hadha ghafilīna)’.”

173) “Or lest ye should say: ‘Our fathers before us may have taken false gods. But we are (their) descendants after them: will you destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?’”⁵⁴

So, hence our “muslim-hood”, or being born as Islamic monotheist is anchored so deeply, by birth *and* by pre-birth – why is it then that there are non-Muslims on earth? A prophetic tradition (hadīth) gives the answer:

Every newborn child is born in a state of fitrah. Then the parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian, just as an animal is born intact. Do you observe any

⁵⁴Transl. after Yusuf Ali. Cf. too The Qur’ān: an Encyclopedia, 211: “The linguistic and religious meaning of fitra is the immutable natural predisposition to the good, innate to every human being from birth, or even from pre-existing state, in which ... the human soul enters into a covenant with God.”– Cf. too Monneret, 214, note 13 and 353, note 9. Unfortunately, Monneret’s comments show that the story is in the mix up with ideas on predestination. Monneret asks: “Are we dealing with absolute predestination? It does not seem so, since man still has the choice to follow the bad habits of his fathers or to direct himself toward God” (353, note 9).

among them that are maimed (at birth)?⁵⁵

Given the number of obstacles, the multiple sources of bad influence (education, parents, school or the mass media of today [fake news or not], etc.) – is there somewhere in the Islamic tradition a hint, what kind of civilization or culture would be best in view of protecting the *fitrah*? Is there a “monotheistic” life-style? Some traditions believe so:

Once, on a mysterious trip to Jerusalem, Gabriel approached the Prophet with two cups, one cup of wine, one cup of (butter)milk. The Prophet chose the cup of milk and Gabriel explained: “You have chosen the *fitrah*.”⁵⁶

No wonder that also Preachers of today – see the numerous interventions on the Internet – certainly

⁵⁵17IN, 1/10; cf. too 16IN/1/1; 19IN, 1/4 The above prophetic tradition has been collected by Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (817-875). His collection is called “*sahīh*”, i.e., “healthy” in an orthodox way [See Sourdel/Sourdel, 604; 17IN, 9/10]. For the same story see also Al-Bukhari (810-870, see Sourdel/Sourdel, 169), a collector whose traditions are also respected as “*sahīh*” (collection transl. into German by D. Ferchl, XV, 13, p. 180); see also 20IN, 2/3: “*Fitrah*... man’s natural tendency within the absence of contrary factors... the influence of setting is decisive.” – As Wensinck, 44/5, show, Ghazzalī too works on this hadīth on “birth-like” *fitrah* and its obstacles thanks to parents, education, etc. – Furthermore the Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilisation and Religion underlines the implication of children being turned away from Islam, namely “that children who grow up to anything other than Muslims have been deprived of their natural spiritual patrimony”! (Encyclopedia, 179).

⁵⁶Hadith by Anas Ibn Malik, quoted after Hayek, *The mystère d’Ismael*, 286. See Mooren, *Macht*, 85. The simple life-style suggested here would fit well with a certain form of mysticism (*tawakkul*; abandonment in God), that would include the prohibition to assure by means of savings one’s future for one year or longer. Does the proverb not say, only three animals spare: the mouse, the ant and the human being? Cf. Al-Ghazzalī, *Le livre de l’unicité...*, 146 [see transl. by H. Boutaleb].

seem to suggest such a thing, i.e., a culture in accordance with *fitrah*. In other words, *not* to choose the *fitrah* could entail that a human being “will suffer hardship and sickness, developing the symptoms of the soul disease, such as arrogance, cruelty, haughtiness, selfishness and pompousness.”⁵⁷ One would get eventually “disturbed, loses balance, gets bored and sick... and turn into somebody ruthless for trivial reasons, all of which indicates, according to psychiatrists, one’s imbalance. This happens on accord of having contradicted one’s *fitrah*.”⁵⁸

Obviously we are dealing with pastoral-homiletical efforts of scholars and preachers of the 21st century to actualize, what it means that every human being is born a Muslim, i.e., that it carries with itself the indestructible “image” of God’s primeval creation. That this actualization betrays the socio-economical background of the authors does not constitute a surprise. See, e.g., the following statement by Dr. M. R. Nabulsi:

It is out of *fitrah* that a mother looks after her child, while the father strives, labours, takes all kind of risks, and undertakes to bring home all his family needs; and when he sees his child warm and dressed, and eating all it needs, he feels indescribable happiness, and that is *fitrah*.⁵⁹

This description might not be relevant for all cultures on earth – but children that are dressed correctly and can eat according to their needs are certainly no apparent contradiction to the benefits of *fitrah*. By the same token we are also reminded of this famous *hadīth*

⁵⁷18IN, 1/6.

⁵⁸18IN, 2/6. – I will not insist on the following “application” of the *fitrah*: “Five things are part of the *fitrah*: removing the pubic hair, circumcision, trimming the moustache, plucking the armpit hair, and trimming the nails,” 21IN, 1/2 and 2/2.

⁵⁹18IN, 2/6.

(prophetic saying): When Allah decreed the creation (qadara al-khalq), He pledged Himself by writing in His book which is laid down with Him: “My mercy prevails over my wrath (rahmatī taghlibu ghadabī)”.⁶⁰

c) La tabdīla – No change

So far we have encountered some of the important building blocks of Sūrah 30, 30, namely God’s *religion* and his pristine original *creation* in the name of *fitrah*, illustrated by the happy smile of the newly born, a smile not yet contaminated by all kinds of “foreign”, i.e., non-monotheistic interferences. Consequently, in particular in the light of the above quoted saying that God’s mercy prevails over His wrath, the ideal situation would be a perfect harmony between religion, creation and humankind. An equilibrium that is *not*, by no means, stable, motionless or rigid, but rather the result of a permanent intensive *interplay* between all factors involved.

If religion turns into a terrorist ideology, then creation is lethally threatened and the smile of a newborn baby is rapidly fading away. If creation is destroyed, religion and humankind will barely survive and if children die because of war and famine something is very wrong with at least one of the other “players”, religion or creation, or with both of them. Each blow against one of the “players” threatens the harmony of the whole which would entail the slow degradation, if not final destruction of the *whole* construction, of “God’s khalq”, God’s creation. Thus, it is in *this* precise sense – namely that we live under the *unchangeable* obligation, a perpetual imperative *to take care of the whole*, the harmony *between* religion creation and humankind – that I understand the famous sentence toward the end

⁶⁰22IN,1/2 = Hadīth qudsi (“saint”) by Abu Hurayrah, Muslim, Bukhari, an-Nasa’i, Ibn Majah.

of Sūrah 30, 30: “there is no change in God’s creation” (la tabdīla lil-khalq Allah) and that this is the only “true religion” (ad-dīn al-qayyīm).

However, taken for itself and out of context, the saying that “there is no change in God’s creation” could serve as a pretext for an arch-conservative *immobilizing* attitude. It would serve the advocates of the “semper idem” in dogma, liturgy and history, all this being something “that cannot support an amendment”⁶¹! However, against such a rigid position one could point toward the theory of abrogation of verses of the Holy Book (replacement of verses by “better” ones, see above, note 20), although one could argue that such a process happened before the final fixture of the Holy Scripture and that the core truth of revelation was not at stake!⁶²

A similar picture of the tension between “no change” and “historical circumstances” emerges, if we look at *salvation history* in general, that is the place of Islam within the orbit of other religions. On the one side, tawhīd, the core message of strict monotheism, has to be preserved, while on the other side different places, cultures and prophets have to be recognized. In this case

⁶¹20IN, 1/3; see too 17IN, 5/10. Against innovation in religion see too the position taken by Al-Ghazzālī’s mystical theology; see for this Bannerth, Pfad, 126/7. See for this also the general atmosphere of Al-Ghazzālī’s teaching, his stand against a “false freedom”! (See Arnaldez, 323).

⁶²“The doctrine of progressive revelation from age to age and time to time does not mean that God’s fundamental Law changes. It is not fair to charge a man of God with forgery because the Message as revealed to him is in a different form from that revealed before, when the core of the Truth is the same, for it comes from God.” Yusuf Ali, commenting Sūrah 16, 101 (p. 684). The truth would not change as we would not change in spite of our passing through different stages of development: “It is God who created you in a state of (helpless) weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then, after strength, gave you weakness and a hoary head” (Sūrah 30, 54; after Yusuf Ali).

the Qur’ān offers a “solution” which could be called “theological”, but obviously is in blatant contradiction to the facts of “history of religion”:

Say: “We believe in God and in that which had been revealed to us, and in that which was revealed to Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqoub and the tribes, and in that which was given to Musa and Isa (Moses and Jesus) and in that which was given to the Prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him we do submit”. (Sūrah 2, 136).

This *theological* standpoint then allows to see in the Coranic revelation the verification or authentication of previous revelations:

And what we have revealed to you of the Qur’ān (the Book) is the truth verifying (musaddiq) that which is before it... (Sūrah, 35, 31, see too 5, 48; 3,39).

The same progression is valid for the position of Muhammad as *the* Prophet. Other prophets have been sent to different peoples, like Jesus (to the Jews only), but Muhammad is the Prophet of *all humankind*: “I am God’s messenger *to you all*...! (Sūrah 7, 158) surrounded, consequently, by “the best community ever raised up for humans...” (Sūrah 3, 110). In the best of worlds this community would have or should have avoided what is the sort of all others: they split up into sects, every sect egoistically “rejoicing in what they had with them”, i.e., their own dogmas and belief-systems. (See Sūrah 30, 32).⁶³

All this demonstrates how difficult it is to keep together the one and the many, in our case the core truth, supposedly unchangeable and the vicissitudes of

⁶³For Sūrah 2, 136; 35, 31; 7, 158; 3,110; 30, 32 see transl. after Shakir, M. H., Tahrike... See too Monneret.168-185, section D; cf. for further interpretation Mooren, Macht, 29-38. 84/5.

history. Yet, at this stage in our investigation, my preoccupation is not so much with the question whether the model offered by the Qur'ān in this matter is workable or not. Rather I wonder which *spiritual resources* help Islam to sustain – in the face of the normal run of history – the lofty ideas about dīn, fitrah and their unchangeable character as expressed in Sūrah 30, 30. In other words, we have to turn once again to the concept of human nature.

The question of human nature

Overlooking Sūrah 30, 30, a thought might arise: if, indeed the human person was created “fitrata Allah”, in accordance with God’s blueprint of creation and thus being endowed with God’s most precious gift, namely to be born a monotheist, that is to be a Muslim by *nature* – should this not provide a person with enough *spiritual power* to confront victoriously the “dark forces” on earth, to not succumb to pessimism but rather to embrace optimism while resisting the power of evil?

Indeed, Yusuf Ali, commenting Sūrah 30, 30 explains:

As turned out from the creative hand of God, man is innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to right and virtue, and endued with true understanding about his own position in the Universe and about God’s goodness, wisdom, and power. That is his true nature, just as the nature of a lamb is to be gentle and of a horse is to be swift.⁶⁴

It sounds like an echo when we read in a contemporary text on fitrah by Yasien Mohamed:

It is precisely because of man’s free will and intellect that he is able to overcome the negative influences of

⁶⁴Ad. loc., Sūrah, 30,30, p. 1059.

the environment and attain to the highest level of psycho-spiritual development...⁶⁵

Yet, is this truly the case? Is there a seamless transition from intention (good will) to action? Does there never occur, what is called the interference of evil? Yes, it does, in the figure of Satan for example. However, the impact of evil is far less dramatic than in Christianity:

Sūrah 20, 120-122: Then Shaitan whispered to Adam: Oh Adam! Shall I lead you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that will never waste away? Then they both ate of the tree, and so their private parts became manifest to them and they began to cover themselves... Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, so he went astray. Then his Lord chose him (Adam) and turned to him with forgiveness and gave him guidance (fataba ‘alayhi wa hada).⁶⁶

That was fast and well done! Also, once on earth, things do not seem to be too complicated – although Sūrah 2, 30 has called the earth a place where “man will make mischief... and shed blood” – now God orders the first couple to “go down” from paradise to earth, where “some of you are an enemy to some others” (20, 123). But God’s guidance will follow quickly and : “whoever follows My guidance, he shall neither go astray, nor shall be distressed” (20, 123). However, the one who will not take the guidance,” for him is a life of hardship and We will raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection” (20, 124) [transl. The Noble Qur’ān]. All in all the situation is not too bad: “Adam had free will and bore the consequences of his deeds. Mankind has free will and thus is free to disobey God, but there are consequences.”⁶⁷

⁶⁷23IN, 6/13.

All this makes one thing very clear: “Islam rejects the Christian concept of original sin and the notion that all humans are born sinners due to actions of Adam. God says in the Qur’ān: ‘And no bearer of burdens shall bear another’s burden.’” (Qur’ān 35, 18).⁶⁸ And with it Islam rejects obviously the doctrine of atonement: “Islam has no doctrine of atonement, and modern Muslim writers, in reaction against the teaching of Christianity, indignantly repudiate the whole idea of God’s atonement, of the atonement of the Righteous for the unrighteous, as immoral and unworthy.”⁶⁹

We could call the Islamic position Ultra-Pelagianism. It is certainly opposite to Augustine’s teaching⁷⁰, but also to the more “Christian-like” position of Sufism, where *grace* plays a decisive role.⁷¹ Yet, my purpose here is not to discuss the details of Pelagius versus

⁶⁸23IN, 6/13. See too the text by Yasien Mohamed 17IN, 6/10-9/10 on “The Christian Doctrine of Original Sin”, furthermore by the same author his remarks on “Sin” in: The Qur’ān: an Encyclopedia, 538.

⁶⁹Padwick, 199. Padwick however, *ibid.*, 199, recognizes a limitation with regard to the exclusion of the atonement theory: “This does not mean, however, that our prayer books do not recognize certain holy works and right acts offered by a sinner himself as having atoning power”.

⁷⁰On Pelagius (and his emphasis on free will) and Augustine’s position against him, see too Brown 308 - 321; 361- 368. Obviously: “... the denial of original sin appeared to undercut the practice of infant baptism”. (361, Brown); also: “Augustine placed behind the largely unreflecting practice of expiatory giving the heavy weight of a view of human nature that made daily expiations a necessity.”— For the social implications of the whole dispute — among other things the use of the language of slavery — see too Brown, 473- 477. — For the dogmatic background see too Franzen, 90/1-93, and also Brox, 140/1.

⁷¹And above all the grace to have received Islam. See Bannerth, Pfad, 261, 295, 320/1; also 325: “O my Lord, in the same way you have begun with your grace — without merit [on my side] — also finish with grace without merit [on my side] what you have begun”. [My transl. ThM].

Augustine and grace in Christianity and in Islam. Rather I would like to draw attention to the following question, namely how the Muslim authors, criticizing original sin while insisting on free will “*manage*” the existence of the freedom-space, the Qur’ān seems to open up; how to “populate” it, so to speak, and for which avail! Hence – isn’t it amazing in a certain sense (at least from a Christian perspective, I admit) to witness, how this priceless asset regarding the human nature, *freedom*, i.e., freedom *thanks* to the fitrah, is simply turned into a tool of *actualizing the shariah*!

It is the shariah that is envisaged by the “dīn al-qayyīm”, the “true religion” (i.e., a religion free from changes) as the end of Sūrah 30, 30 declares it; the shariah being the “secret” behind dīn, fitrah and tawhīd all along, behind religion, nature and monotheism! Thus Yasien Mohamed for example simply declares dīn (religion) and tawhīd (monotheism) synonyms of shariah.⁷² The person of free will, actualizing the lofty goal of spiritual up-lifting is “able to conform to the requirements of his fitrah and the *dictates* of the Shariah. He actualizes his fitrah, and attains psycho-spiritual integration and inner peace”⁷³ – inner peace thanks to the LAW! See also the definition of the shariah by Abdur Rahman I. Doi of the Nigerian Ahmadu Bello University:

Sharī’ah is the path to be followed. Literally it means ‘the way to a watering place’. It is the path not only leading to Allah... but the path believed by all Muslims to be the path shown by Allah, the Creator Himself through His Messenger Prophet Muhammad... Muslims are obliged to strive for the implementation of that path, and that of no other path.⁷⁴

⁷²See 17IN, 3/10.

⁷³17IN, 4/10//5/10, [italics by me, ThM].

⁷⁴Sharī’ah, 2.

The problem that arises at this level, however, is that Muslim scholars have to recognize that the Law has to be explained, interpreted. And for this, there are schools and rules.⁷⁵ It is even conceded that shariah is binding only for Muslims:

The function of the prophets and Divine revelation is not only to remind man about that which he already knows (that is tawhid [monotheism]), but also to teach him that which he does not yet know (that is, Shariah). Man already knows tawhid because of the pre-existent fitrah....⁷⁶

For the true believer, however, those converted to Islam, the matter related to fitrah is just not the full knowledge. The fitrah-knowledge has to be completed by the knowledge of “*Divinely* revealed laws, the methodology of worship and devotion, etc.”.⁷⁷ However, as all these scholarly explanations make it clear that we are confronted with at least two difficulties. Firstly, there is Abdur Rahman’s notice (from above) that Muslims “are obliged to strive for the implementation of that path” [i.e., of the shariah]. How far does this implementation order go, and secondly, what has to be done, if and when shariah law collides with the (legal) *public* space of the surrounding society; in case this society is not a homogeneous Muslim society, but rather a (post)modern society of the 21st century society, where Islam is not supported by the state? In such a case one gets the impression that the shariah, all too often, is giving answers – answers qualified as being *divinely* ordered! – to questions that the non Muslim world (Christian or otherwise) *has never asked* (or does not ask any

⁷⁵See e.g. Philips, Fiqh; Doi, Shari’ah, 6ff; 17IN, 5/10/15/11; Mooren, War and Peace, the chapter on divine Law, 77-86, etc.

⁷⁶Yasien Mohamed in 17IN, 5/10.

⁷⁷17IN, 5/10 [italics by me, ThM].

longer)!⁷⁸

Anyway, the polemic around the shariah demonstrates that the “spirit of the shariah” experiences some difficulties to pass through the eye of the needle of 200 years of enlightenment culture!⁷⁹ Among the important

⁷⁸Answers that comprise polygamy, wife beating, the place and power of women in society in general (clothing restrictions, political rights, etc.); food restrictions for school-meals, fight for public prayer space or a public space free from all Christian symbols, etc. We cannot be exhaustive here. Some examples might suffice. Thus see Denffer, 88-91, dealing among other things with the difficulties of Muslim parents (in this case converts to Islam) to educate their sons and above all their daughters according to shariah rules and in this way driving them eventually into social isolation (at birthday parties, sport events, school events, etc.). Wife beating, by the same source (Denffer, 173/4), is permitted by religious law, but socially not admissible. – For the gender question in general see e.g. F. M. Göcek, and Sh. Balaghi (eds), *Reconstructing Gender*, and with regard to the Middle East O. Safi (ed), *Progressive Muslims*; furthermore, Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid on the women question between fundamentalism and enlightenment in E. Heller, H. Mosbahi (eds), *Islam, Demokratie, Moderne*. See also the “horror stories in fatawa al-mar’a (Islamic fatawa regarding women (Darussalam, Riyad, Saudi Arabia 1986). See furthermore the contributions by C. Nelson, (on feminism and self-identity) and by S. Ghandour (on gender, post-colonialism and war) in J. C. Hawley, *The Postcolonial Crescent*. – At any rate, the friction and difficulties in dialogue are perhaps more on the shariah side than on the side of dogma. (Cf. for this also H. Srouf on al-Afghani, 208).

⁷⁹I refer here to a saying by the great French historian Fernand Braudel who writes in his monumental “Grammaire des civilisations” with regard to a period of unsuccessfulness of Islam (after the 13th century) after some splendid centuries earlier: “This unsuccessfulness did not cause Islam to die as a civilization. Only, Islam has taken, where Europe is concerned, a material retardation of two centuries. But which centuries!” [these have been, meaning: extraordinary important ones!] (Grammaire, 123 [transl. by me ThM]). – Add to this the statement by I. Abu-Lughod: “In a way the superstructure of the cultural manifestations was transmitted but not the intellectual bent of mind which in the West had led to its establishment. We can speculate, therefore, that the early nineteenth-century transmission of European knowledge had only a

spiritual and intellectual tools that have been developed in this period we find Rousseau's philosophy of nature without which there would have been no slogan like "liberty, fraternity, equality! Then again, we find Muslims that have tried to react "productively" to what has happened in the West, overwhelmed as they might have been by its "power".⁸⁰ Those who have answered spiritually most forcefully to the new situation modern times have created for Islam as a "religion" is the Syrian writer and poet Adonis (Ali Ahmad Said). He states in a paper on the "dead end [Sackgasse] of modernity in Arab society" that religion manifests itself today above all as "Law"– i.e., in categories of 'permitted' and 'forbidden' and that means as *censorship* – and ... consequently as *power*..."⁸¹ Thus it is modern individual's power thirst that transforms the path to God into a "dead end" [Sackgasse] toward nothingness and hope-

limited immediate effect on the intellectual outlook of the Arab world. It introduced superficial changes but did not shake the foundations of Arab society as that Arab society had been shaken during the ninth century." (The Arab Rediscovery, 72). – For the "spiritual information gap" between the Arab World and the West, including problems regarding to understand the fitrah, see also The Qur'an: an Encyclopedia, 212.

⁸⁰See the reaction to the West formulated by P. Cachia (In a glass darkly, 29): "The most enviable of the West's achievement, indeed, the one that authenticated all others was its power, even though it was wielded at the expense of the Arabs themselves." – For further (productive) reactions to the West see e.g. I. Abu-Lughod's study on the Arab Rediscovery of Europe; Kh. Al-Khusry's research into the life of "Three Reformers"; Al-Khusry's study deals with Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi and 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakebi; see too H. Srour's study on al-Afghani; A. Bilgrami (*What is a Muslim*) and H. Rahim (*The mirage of Faith and Justice*) in J. C. Hawley, *The Postcolonial Crescent* – to name only a few out of a vast list of researchers.

⁸¹Adonis, *Die Sackgasse der Moderne in der arabischen Gesellschaft*, in: Heller, E., Moshabi H., eds, 66/7 [my ital. and transl.].

lessness, a “power” that is nourished and exercised in the name of the “Law”.⁸²

Obviously, the appreciation of the “Law” in the case of Adonis and similar thinkers is quite different from the “Law’s” exaltation as the quintessence of even religion, *fitrah* and faith. But this kind of tension around the “Law” is as old as Judaism itself, from which Islam has inherited the problem; and even in Christianity it is part of its very foundation. However, be it as it might be with the appreciation of the Law itself – one thing has become clear by now, that it is in the name of the “Law” that Islam appropriates itself the original “space”, opened up via Sūrah 30,30, the space of the primordial creation, the *spiritual freedom* offered by the *fitrah*. Hence into the very heart of this *fitrah* is written the Law!

Yet, the Law needs a Prophet to pronounce it. Since at the very beginning there is a *word*, a *verbum*, the *kalima*, eventually conferred to the *kitab*, the sacred book. A *verbum* that can be written, printed, recited, chanted, listened to and be obeyed to! However, the word is *not a person*, not a *destiny to be shared*. In other words: Islam, like Judaism, is *the* religion of the *book* in its most strict form and by the same token – monotheism, *tawhīd*, in its most radical kind: “Allah, He is the legislator, His Prophet puts the Law into motion and is the Law’s interpreter – as for the human beings – they only have to obey the Law.”⁸³ So much for human nature.

⁸²To shed more light on the concept of “Sackgasse”, dead end” used by Adonis see too Ferro, M., *Le choc de l’Islam*; Lacouture, J., Tuéni, Gh., Khoury, G.D., *Un siècle pour rien*.

⁸³Mawdūdī, quoted in Platti, “La Théologie,” 245 [my translation].

Bibliography

- Abu-Lughod, I. *The Rediscovery of Europe. A Study in Cultural Encounters*. Princeton University Press, 1963 [Saqi Books 2011].
- Adonis. "Die Sackgasse der Moderne in der arabischen Gesellschaft," in: Heller, E., Moshabi H. (eds), 62-71.
- Ahmad Bashir, B. *A Selection of the Sayings of the Holy Prophet*. Rabwah, 1958 [Ahmadiyya Muslim Foreign Missions].
- Al-Husry, Kh. *Three Reformers. A Study in Modern Arab Political Thought*. Beirut 1966.
- Al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, Cairo, Dar al-mushaf.
- Arnaldes, R. "Ghazālī, al (1058-1111)," in: *Dictionnaire de l'Islam, religion et civilisation, Encyclopedia Universalis* Albin Michel, 1967, 319-324.
- Averroes [Ibn Rushd]. "Grand commentaire" de la métaphysique," Bibliotheca Arabica Scholasticorum, série Arabe. Texte arabe inédit, établi par le Père Maurice Bouyges, s.j. Beirut, ³1990/⁴1991, Dar El-Mashreq ed.
- Badawi, A. *Averroès (Ibn Rushd)*, Paris 1998, Études de philosophie médiévale.
- Bannerth, E., transl., comment., *Al-Ghazālī. Der Pfad der Gottesdiener*. [Series: Wort und Antwort. Begegnung der Religionen, vol. 33]. Salzburg, 1964.
- Bedenbender, A. *Frohe Botschaft am Abgrund. Das Markusevangelium und der Jüdische Krieg*. Leipzig 2013.
- Biblia Hebraica* (ed. R. Kittel), Stuttgart s.d. [Württembergische Bibelanstalt]
- Biser, E. *Die Gleichnisse Jesu. Versuch einer Deutung*. München, 1965.
- Bilgrami, A. "What is a Muslim? Fundamental Commitment and Cultural Identity," in: Hawley, J. C., (ed), 35-58.
- *Die glaubensgeschichtliche Wende. Eine theologische Positionsbestimmung*. Graz, Wien, Köln, ²1987 [1986].
- "Zur Freiheit hat uns Christus befreit" (Gal 5,1). Die Identität des Christentums und der Dialog der Religionen, in: 20 Jahre Europäische Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste, Festschrift, (M. Eder ed.). Salzburg, 2009, 443-451.
- Blachère, R., *Le Coran*, transl., Paris, 1966.
- Blumenberg, H. *Arbeit am Mythos*. Frankfurt/M, 1979.
- *Höhlenausgänge*. Frankfurt/M, 1996 [1989].
- Boutaleb, H. (introd., comment, transl.), *Al-Ghazālī. Le livre de l'unicité divine et de la remise confiante en Dieu. Kitab at-tawhīd wa-ttawakkul*, Beirut, 2002 [Albouraq].

- Braudel, F. *Grammaire des civilisations*. Paris [Flammarion] 1993 [1963].
- Brown, P. *Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD*. Princeton New Jersey 2012.
- Brox, N. *Kirchengeschichte des Altertums*. Düsseldorf ²2004. [1983].
- Cachia, P. *In a Glass Darkly: The Faintness of Islamic Inspiration in Modern Arabic Literature*, in: Bürgel, J. C., (ed), *Der Islam im Spiegel zeitgenössischer Literatur der islamischen Welt*. Leiden 1985, 26-44.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New York, etc., ²1995.
- Denffer, A. v., (ed). *Islam hier und heute. Beiträge vom 1.-12. Treffen deutschsprachiger Muslime (1976-19819)*. Cologne 1981 [Verlag Islamische Bibliothek/M. Rassoul].
- Doi, Abdur Rahman I. *Shari'ah. The Islamic Law*. London, UK 1984.
- Dunlop, D. M. *Arab Civilization to A.D. 1500*. Beirut 1971.
- Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilisation and Religion*, (Netton, J. R., ed.). London, New York 2018.
- Ennery, M. *Dictionnaire Hébreu-Francais*. Paris 1971 [1827].
- Fatawa al-mar'a* (Islamic fatawa regarding women), Darussalam, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 1986).
- Ferchl, D., (transl., ed). *Sahih al-Buhari. Nachrichten von Taten und Aussprüchen des Propheten Muhammad*. Stuttgart 1991.
- Ferro, M. *Le choc de l'Islam, XVIII^e -XXI^e*. Paris 2003.
- Franzen, A. *Kleine Kirchengeschichte*. Freiburg, Basel, Wien ³1970 [1965].
- Ghandour, S. “Gender, Postcolonial Subject and the Lebanese Civil War in Sitt Marie Rose,” in: Hawley, J. C., (ed), 157-165.
- Göcek, F. M., Balaghi Sh. (eds). *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East. Tradition, Identity and Power*. New York 1994.
- Hawley, J. C. *The Postcolonial Crescent. Islam's Impact on Contemporary Literature*. New York ... 1998 [P. Lang].
- Hayek, M. *Le Mystère d'Ismael*. Paris 1964.
- Heller, E. Mosbahi, H. (eds), *Islam, Demokratie, Moderne. Aktuelle Antworten arabischer Denker*. München 1998.
- Irabi, A. *Arabische Soziologie. Studien zur Geschichte und Gesellschaft des Islam*. Darmstadt 1989.
- James, W. *The Varieties of Religious Experience. A study in Human Nature*. Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902. New York [The modern Library] 2002.
- Kermani, N. *Gott ist schön. Das ästhetische Erbe des Koran*. München ²2003 [1999].
- Koyré, A. *Du monde clos à l'univers infini*. Paris 1973 [1962];

- [English: *From the closed World to the infinite Universe*. Baltimore 1957] .
- Lacouture, J., Tuéni, Gh., Khoury, G.D. *Un siècle pour rien. Le Moyen Orient arabe de l'Empire ottoman à l'Empire américain*. Paris 2002.
- Limbeck, M. *Zürnt Gott wirklich? Fragen an Paulus*. Stuttgart 2001.
- Monneret, J.-L. *Les grands thèmes du Coran. Classement thématique*. Paris 2003.
- Mooren, Th. "Monothéisme coranique et anthropologie," in: *Anthropos* 76(1981) 529-561.
- *Macht und Einsamkeit Gottes. Dialog mit dem islamischen Radikal-Montheismus*. Würzburg, Altenberge 1991.
- *Making the Earth a Human Dwelling Place. Essays in the philosophy and anthropology of culture and religion*. Würzburg, Altenberge 2000.
- *"I do not adore what you adore!" Theology and Philosophy in Islam*. Delhi 2001.
- "Unity in Diversity: The 'Prophets' Muhammad, Abraham and Jesus and the Islam-Christian Dialogue." *MST Review* 6 (2004): 73-113.
- *War and Peace in Monotheistic Religions*. Delhi [Media House] 2008.
- *Freedom through Subjugation. The Good Shepherd according to Foucault, the West, the Chinese and the Church – Human Sciences in Dialogue with Missiology*. Wien, Berlin 2009.
- *The Challenge of Interreligious Dialogue at the Dawn of the III. Millenium. A Viewpoint from the West*, in: 20 Jahre Europäische Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste, Festschrift, (M. Eder ed.). Salzburg 2009, 509-520.
- Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid. "Die Frauenfrage zwischen Fundamentalismus und Aufklärung," in Heller, E., Mosbahi, H., (eds), 193-210.
- Nelson, C. *Feminist Expression as Self-Identity and Cultural Critique; The Discourse of Doria Shafik*, in: Hawley, J. C., (ed), 95-120.
- Padwick, C. E. *Muslim Devotions. A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use*. Oxford 1966, [1961].
- Paret, R. *Der Koran. Kommentar und Konkordanz*. Stuttgart... 1971.
- *Der Koran*, transl., Stuttgart... ⁴1985 [1979].
- Philips., B. *Le Fiqh et son évolution. Introduction à l'histoire des écoles de pensées juridiques de l'Islam*. Lyon 1998 [ed. Tawhid].
- Platti, E. "La théologie de Abū l-A. 'la Mawdūdī," in Vermeulen, U., and De Smet, D. (eds), *Philosophy and Arts in the Islamic World, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 87, Leuven 1998, 243-251.

- Rahim H. “The Mirage of Faith and Justice: Some Sociopolitical Themes in Post-Colonial Urdu Short Stories,” in: Hawley, J. C., (ed), 229- 248.
- Safi, O., (ed). *Progressive Muslims. On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*. Oxford 2003; reprint 2004.
- Shakir, M. H., trans. *The Qur’ān*, Tahrike Tarsile Qur’ān, Inc., Elmhurst, N.Y. 1990.
- Sourdel, J. and Sourdel, D. *Dictionnaire historique de l’Islam*. Paris 2004 [PUF 1996].
- Spaemann, R. *Schritte über uns hinaus. Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze II*. Stuttgart 2011.
- Srour H. *Die Staats - und Gesellschaftstheorie bei Sayyid Gama laddin “Al Afghani” als Beitrag zur Reform der islamischen Gesellschaften in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Freiburg i.B. 1977.
- The Noble Qur’ān. English translation of the meanings and commentary*, (Engl/Arab), King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur’ān, Madinah, KSA.
- The Qur’ān: an Encyclopedia*, (O. Leaman, ed.). London, New York 2006.
- The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, (Esposito, J. L., ed.). Oxford 2003.
- Wehr, H. *A Dictionary of modern written Arabic* (J. M. Cowan ed). Beirut, London 1974 [reprint].
- Wensinck, A. J. *La pensée de Ghazzālī*. Paris 1940.
- Wielandt, R. *Offenbarung und Geschichte im Denken moderner Muslime*, Wiesbaden 1971. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Veröffentlichungen der orientalischen Kommission, vol. XXV.
- Wüstenfeld, F. *Geschichte der arabischen Ärzte und Naturforscher*. Hildesheim, New York 1978 [Göttingen 1840].
- Yusuf Ali, A. *The Holy Qur’ān*, transl. and comment., Arabic/English. Islamic Propagation Center [1934].

IN = Internet

- 1IN** = <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-idea-of-nature-2670631?print/5/14/2018>
- 2IN** = Nature (philosophy)-Wikipedia/ 5/14/2018
- 3IN** = Nature (in philosophy)-Dictionary definition of Nature /in Philosophoy) I Encyclopedia.com:FREE online dictionary/ 5/14/2018
- 4IN** = Natural philosophy – Wikipedia/ 5/14/2018
- 5IN** = Jean-Jacques Rousseau – Wikipedia/ 5/14/2018
- 6IN** = Ar-Rum-30.Surah The Romans verse-30-The Noble

- Quran(Compare al Quran Translation in English)
<http://en.noblequran.org/quran/surah/surah-ar-rum/ayat-30/>
 5/14/2018
- 7IN** = Din (Arabic) Wikipedia/ 6/5/2018
- 8IN** = Din and Theology in Qur'ān and Sunnah-Dictionary definition
 of Din and Theology in Qur'ān and Sunnah I Encyclopedia.com:
 FREE online dictionary/ 6/5/2018
- 9IN** = Al-Quran Tafsir I Tafsir Maududi-Surah30.Ar-rum,
 Ayaat30To32 I Alim; www.alim.org/library/quran/AlQuran-tafsir/MDD/30/30/ 5/5/2018
- 10IN** = Al-Quran Tafsir I Tafsir Ibn Kathir - Surah 30.Ar-Rum,
 Ayaat30To32 I Alim
www.alim.org/library/quran/AlQuran-tafsir/TIK/30/30/ 5/5/2018
- 11IN** = Surah 30.Ar-Rum, Ayat 30-30
<https://quran.com/30/30> [Tafheen ul Ouran]; Islamicstudies.info/
 reference.php?su-ra=30&ver-se=30/ 5/5/2018
- 12IN** = What does Hanif mean? How was the practice of Hanif
 religion in the Era of Jahiliyya? I Questions on Islam
<https://questionsonislam.com/question/what-does-hanif-mean-how-was-practice-hanif-religion-era-jahiliyya/> 6/5/2018
- 13IN** = Hanif I Islam I Britannica.com/ 6/5/2018
- 14IN** = Hanif – Wikipedia/ 6/5/2018
- 15IN** = Fitra – Wikipedia/ 5/4/2018
- 16IN** = Fitra - Oxford Islam Studies On Line/ 5/5/2018
- 17IN** = <https://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/DefinitionFitrah.htm/> 5/5/2018
- 18IN** = <https://www.muhammad-pbuh.com/en/?p=155> [Dr. M. Rateb Nabulsi] 5/5/2018
- 19IN** = Each child is born in a state of “Fitrah” i.e., Islam!! Dr. Zaik Naik (Urdu) - You Tube/ 5/5/2018
- 20IN** = <http://www.muslimgreeting.com/2016/07/fitrah-meaning-in-islam.html> / 5/5/2018
- 21IN** = <http://islamqa.info/en/2887what-does-fitrah-mean?-islamqa.info/> / 5/5/2018
- 22IN** = Hadith Qudsi Hadith 1- Muflihun/ 5/6/2018
- 23IN** = The story of Adam (part 3of 5) - The Descent - The Religion of Islam; <https://www.islamreligion.com/articles/1196/story-of-adam-part-3/> 5/5/2018
- Ad Gentes:** http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html/ 6/22/2018
- Lumen Gentium:** http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html/ 6/22/2018

On the Collaboration Between Bishop Constant Jurgens, CICM, of the Diocese of Tuguegarao and the Divine Word Missionaries

Michael G. Layugan*

Abstract: The article examines the role of Bishop Jurgens, CICM, in the establishment of the first SVD mission seminary in the Philippines and the SVD missionaries' involvement in northern Cagayan parishes in the 1930s. It makes use of various archival sources to recreate the collaboration between the Bishop and the SVD, shedding light 1) on the SVD's decision to take over parishes in northern Cagayan that belonged to the Diocese of Tuguegarao; 2) on the Bishop's assistance in the creation of Christ the King Mission Seminary in New Manila; and 3) on the roles of various individuals and institutions in making the collaboration between the Bishop and the SVDs possible.

Keywords: missionary work, seminary, parish, SVD Missionaries, CICM Missionaries

Introduction

During the incipient years of the *Societas Verbi Divini* (SVD) presence in the Islands, the *Congregatio Immaculatae Cordis Mariae* (CICM) missionaries assisted the SVDs who were still adjusting to their new mission in Abra. One of the CICMs who established a good rapport with the SVDs in the Philippines and who played a major role in the missionary engagement of the

♦ Rev. Michael G. Layugan, SVD, is currently the Rector of the Divine Word Theological Seminary in Tagaytay City, Philippines and professor at CICM-Maryhill School of Theology and Divine Word Institute of Mission Studies.

Society in Cagayan was Bishop Constant Jurgens, CICM, of the Diocese of Tuguegarao.

This article delves into the role of Bishop Jurgens, CICM, in the establishment of the first SVD mission seminary in the Philippines and in the inauguration of SVD missionary engagement in the parishes in northern Cagayan. The researcher engages various archival sources and weaves the conversations in their written form, between the Bishop and the SVD missionaries, into a narrative. It will also shed light on the reasons why the Society of the Divine Word took over parishes in northern Cagayan which belonged to the Diocese of Tuguegarao and why the Bishop supported the establishment of Christ the King Mission Seminary in New Manila. This research also answers the questions relating to the financial assistance which the Bishop extended to the SVD for the realization of the aforementioned enterprise.

Acquisition of a Property in New Manila

Negotiations on the Purchase

With the increasing number of SVDs, the building in Tayuman, Manila could no longer accommodate both the residents and their visiting confreres causing much discomfort among them. The Regional Superior suggested to have another site outside of Manila for the central headquarters of the Society, a printing press and an apostolic school since the Oroquieta property in Tayuman was not big enough for the aforementioned purposes.¹ The SVDs proposed to buy a part of an estate in the outskirts of Manila and wrote a letter to the

¹Buttenbruch to Hagspiel, 20 August 1929, Manila, Provinciate Archives of the Philippine Central Province (PAPHC), Historical Archives (*HA*), vol. Correspondence with Hagspiel.

Generalate about the proposal which the members of the General Council approved. Concerning the proposed purchase of the property, Superior General Fr. Wilhelm Gier wrote to Regional Superior Fr. Theodor Buttenbruch: "I would like to think that this time everything was carefully deliberated upon so as not to have fear of any subsequent disappointment like the previous plans with the large farm. Since you have the necessary money for the purchase of two hectares (for the purpose of a profitable resale), the General Council gladly gives you the requested permission."² The procurator of the Scheut missionaries, Fr. Karel Beurms, CICM, was instrumental in the acquisition of a property in New Manila in 1929, which was situated just across the road from the CICM missionaries' house. He introduced Fr. Buttenbruch to Mr. José Maria Hemady who was the husband of Doña Magdalena Ysmael Hemady, the owner of the Magdalena Estate that included the soon-to-be Seminary property. Together with Bishop Wilhelm Finnemann, who was newly installed as auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Manila, Fr. Buttenbruch made an ocular visit to the site in New Manila. A deal was negotiated with the Magdalena Estate on the purchase of the property.

²Gier to Buttenbruch, 19 October 1929, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Letters of Superior General I. The quotation is a translation of the German text. The smaller lots were equivalent to two hectares. See also Gier to Hundt, 19 October 1929, Rome, Archivum Generale Societatis Verbi Divini (AGSVD), Archivio Storico (AS), Raccoglitore (R)730:1925-1929. Fr. Gier wrote, „Auch wir alle freuen uns sehr, daß der Kaufvertrag wegen des Geländes in New-Manila gesetzlich abgeschlossen ist. So haben Sie doch einmal festen Boden unter den Füßen und alles andere wird nur mehr eine Frage der Zeit sein.“ See Gier to Hergesheimer, 18 January 1930, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. See also Heinrich Hundt to Generalate, 20 August 1929, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

To defray the cost of the land, Fr. Bittenbruch sought financial assistance from the SVDs in the United States. Fr. Bernard Bonk, writing on behalf of the Provincial Superior in the United States, responded to the letter of Fr. Bittenbruch dated 20 August 1929:

I am in entire harmony with the views of Father Provincial to the intent that in sanctioning the request for such a loan as you mention, the Generalate should properly send a written guarantee for such a loan *prior* to its issuance. Otherwise, there is always a good chance for misunderstandings arising, with subsequent difficulties as to the precise placing of responsibilities in the matter. I feel considerable interest and no little satisfaction in observing your intention to look out for and safeguard your future interests; but I am sure that the procedure should be as stated, in order to leave all concerned in a sound position with regard to such a transaction.

In the second place, I must inform you that at the present time we ourselves are unable to secure 5% money, being required just now to pay some little more than that for our own loans. There is a possibility that we may be able, later on, to obtain money at 5%, but cannot at this writing....

The price on the 15 hectares of land appears to be high to us; but you had competent men with you on this matter in the Belgian Scheut Fathers, and of course we can know nothing of the conditions. If the property value is actually *there*, then of course you are secure in paying that amount.³

The members of the Regional Council in the presence of Visitor General Theodor Kost decided on the purchase of the property owned by the Magdalena

³Bonk to Bittenbruch, 1 October 1929, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

Estate, Inc., in a meeting on 21 November 1929.⁴ The contract for the acquisition of the property was signed on 2 December 1929. The property of 17 hectares was valued at 320,000.00 pesos excluding 17 smaller lots which were acquired by the SVD for the amount of 84,825.53 pesos. The smaller lots were intended to be resold to prospective buyers. The SVDs tried fundraising campaigns to secure the needed funds for the payment of the land but the donations were not sufficient so they sought the assistance of the SVD Provincialate in Techny, Illinois to procure for them a loan which was suggested by the Generalate in Rome. After the transactions were concluded, the Certificate of Title No. 16575 was transferred to the Society.⁵

Fr. Battenbruch expressed his gratitude to Fr. Gier: “I thank you for having allowed us to buy 17 hectares of land for our central house in New Manila. The purchase has been concluded, and I believe that this center will be a great blessing for our whole mission.”⁶ With the conclusion of the negotiations relating to the purchase, Fr. Heinrich Hundt wrote a letter to Fr. Bonk concerning the loan on 8 March 1930. In his reply Fr. Bonk put his thoughts on the matter in writing:

I am somewhat surprised about your assertion that you expect arrangements for a loan to be agreed upon between us and our general administration in Rome. I have a letter here written from Rome by Father

⁴Regionalrat-Sitzung, 21 November 1929, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila. The members of the Regional Council were Fr. Theodor Battenbruch, Fr. Michael Hergesheimer, Fr. Philipp Beck and Fr. Heinrich Hundt.

⁵Hemady to Battenbruch, 17 December 1929, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

⁶Battenbruch to Gier, 1 February 1930, Rome, AGSVD, *AS*, R730:1929-1935. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Grendel, “Gesuch um Genehmigung von Landankauf in Manila”, 8 July 1930, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

Grendel in which he states that the Philippines and this our Province here in America first must agree upon details with regard to the loan and then have these arrangements approved of by the Generalate. These are, to my mind, some conflicting statements and since the receipt of the letter from Rome I have waited for some information and some additional suggestions from your side, but did not receive them until now. Even at this time I am at a loss to understand how you wanted to have the loan arranged. It seems from the tenor of your letter that the land is not as yet purchased but that you will have to pay the purchase price when certain conditions are fulfilled, and that you at present hold a contract to buy and pay later on. Since you do not need the money now it would be imprudent to take up a loan for you and invest the money, and only use it then perhaps after a few years when you will be in a position to acquire the land.

As to your loan, you have no other suggestions than that we should get a loan for you at the rate of five percent and reinvest it for ten percent. You will understand that this is simply an impossibility. First of all, if we could so easily get a loan at five percent rate and could with equal ease reinvest it at a ten percent rate that would be a wonderful thing and a remarkable opportunity for us to make money without doing anything. And on the other hand, if we cannot do this for ourselves, how then can we do it for you. Furthermore, a loan for fifteen or twenty years is entirely out of the question. You must be satisfied to get a loan for from five to ten years and then the rate will not be five percent but with all expenses and everything included I do not think that we can make you another proposition than of taking a loan for you at the rate of six percent.

What are your plans of meeting the interest payments; and also the part-payments on the principal. You will understand that we hardly take any loans for lengthy periods unless promise is made to make some

part-payments on the principal during the course of the years... how will you guarantee this payment to us?⁷

Fr. Bittenbruch also dispatched a letter to Fr. Bruno Hagspiel about the property in New Manila: “We found a beautiful terrain in New Manila with the assistance of the procurator of the Scheut missionaries. By the end of this year, the España Road will be built and so a connection will be made between New Manila and Manila: New Manila is situated three kilometers from our present residence at Oroquieta. Before we signed the contract, Fr. Kost and the Most Reverend Bishop Theodor Buddenbrock inspected the terrain and the conditions of the contract.”⁸ Financial woes, however, continued to delay the payment of the property. Concerning the loan, Fr. Bonk wrote another letter to Fr. Hundt,

I have your letter of May 31st, and your statement, regarding the proposed loan, and the amortization of same. I am afraid we shall not be able to give you satisfaction at the present date. Our funds are pretty well tied up, and we would not be able at present to take up another loan of \$150,000. The plan of such is well thought out, only I do not like the idea, as I expressed myself in my previous letter, that we are supposed to get the money at a low rate of interest, and you get a guarantee at the same time that Steyl will pay you a high rate of interest. I know that we have never had that guarantee before.⁹

Although Fr. Bittenbruch was not successful in securing a loan of 150,000 dollars, he was able to obtain a loan of 15,000 dollars from Techny, Illinois. The

⁷Bonk to Hundt, 7 April 1930, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

⁸Bittenbruch to Hagspiel, 31 May 1930, Rome, AGSVD, *AS*, R730:1929-1935. The quotation is a translation of the German text. The Deed of Sale was signed on 2 December 1929.

⁹Bonk to Hundt, 14 July 1930, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

aforementioned amount together with the return of the smaller lots which were bought earlier was used to pay for the first installment of the value of the property.

The contract which was entered into between the SVD and the Magdalena Estate Inc. stipulated a cutback in the price of the property. Representing the Magdalena Estate Inc., Jose Cavanna elaborated on the reduction of the value of the estate:

In connection with the consultation on the obligations of the corporation The Society of the Divine Word to obtain the reduction of PhP20,000.00 in which the clause of the contract of 22nd of December 1929 is contracted between Magdalena Estate Inc. and The Society of the Divine Word, I would like to inform you that according to the tenth paragraph in relation to the thirteenth of said contract, it is required: 1.o That the Magdalena Estate Inc. has not realized to connect the city of Manila with España Street Extension on or before the year 1930 and 2.o Assuming that the aforementioned Extension is not connected with the city of Manila with España Street, the entity The Society of the Divine Word, would have built and finished on 31 December 1930 a residence of strong materials of a value not less than Php 7,000.00 on the date of its construction and the abovementioned house must be 15 meters or more distance from the street. Failure to comply with any of these conditions will forfeit the discount of Php 20,000.00.¹⁰

In order to avail of the discount, the SVDs planned to build a small house before Christmas, so Fr. Bittenbruch and Fr. Hundt could reside there. Two German architects were commissioned to design the site

¹⁰Cavanna to Hergesheimer, 22 November 1930, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

development of the SVD property in New Manila.¹¹ On 24 December 1930 the Philippine Steelhouse, Inc. informed the Regional Superior that the four-room house which was bought on 29 November 1930 was ready for occupancy.¹² In the meanwhile, Mr. Hemady in a frenzied race to complete the road project engaged the services of the inmates of the Bilibid Prison. No discount was in the offing. Architect A. Gabler-Gumbert was asked to make the design for the building which was discussed during the regional council meeting from 14-16 January 1931. However, the proposed Gabler-Gumbert design was very expensive, so the CICMs recommended their civil engineer M. Karolchuck who drafted a blueprint with a more reasonable estimate. Both Fr. Bittenbruch and Mr. Karolchuck signed the contract which covered the construction of the building of the mission house on 28 July 1933.

To provide a temporary accommodation for the community, a workplace made of corrugated sheets was constructed in 1931. As the SVDs finally accomplished putting up their temporary quarters, they awaited the approval of the Generalate for the proposed construction of a mission house. The General Council approved the building of a mission house in New Manila during its meeting on 1 July 1931, bringing joy to the SVDs in the

¹¹Bittenbruch to Gier, 5 December 1930, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. Fr. Hergesheimer wrote to Gier: „Nun hat die Gesellschaft auch in Neu Manila neben dem schon beruehmt gewordenen „Stahlhaus“ den Anfang gemacht zu den groesseren Gebaeuden.“ See also Hergesheimer to Gier, 12 May 1931, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935.

¹²Manager to Bittenbruch, 24 December 1930, PAPHC, HA, vol. New Manila.

Philippines.¹³ With the permission from the Generalate to begin the project, Fr. Bittenbruch, Fr. Michael Hergesheimer and Fr. Heinrich Bürschen gave the green light for the community in New Manila to purchase machines and supplies for the carpentry shop and erect a fence around the property.¹⁴ Nevertheless, as soon as the project was headway, financial constraints began to impede the progress of the undertaking. The Regional Superior sought financial assistance from North America. The SVDs in Techny, Illinois could not obtain the needed loan. Furthermore, the German government imposed financial restrictions on 1 August 1931 that curbed the transfer of funds outside of the country.¹⁵

A Prospective SVD Mission Seminary

Bishop Jurgens was informed about the intention of the Society of the Divine Word to establish a mission seminary in New Manila for the formation of SVD candidates. He paid Fr. Bittenbruch a visit on 1 September 1931 and initiated the negotiations for the establishment of an SVD mission in the Diocese of Tuguegarao in Cagayan. On 20 September 1931, the

¹³Hundt asked for the construction of Kommunitaetshaus, Missionshaus und Kirche. See Hundt to Gier, 21 May 1931. Fr. Colling signed the permission of the Superior General on 1 July 1931. See Colling, *Gesuch um Genehmigung des Generalplanes fuer die Bauten in New Manila*, vol. New Manila. Fr. Hergesheimer wrote to Fr. Gier: „Die amtliche Genehmigung des Baues in Neu Manila ist gluecklich hier angekommen, und P. Rektor Puder hat dafuer das Silentium ausfallen lassen.“ See Hergesheimer to Gier, 3 October 1931, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935.

¹⁴Bittenbruch, Hergesheimer and Bürschen, 31 December 1931, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

¹⁵Telegram, 25 June 1931, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. See also Grendel to Bittenbruch, 31 December 1931, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Letters of Superior General I.

Bishop visited the SVD Generalate in Rome and discussed with the Superior General the pastoral needs of his diocese. He asked for SVD missionaries to work in Cagayan. Fr. Gier, however, could not make any commitment.¹⁶ When the Bishop came to know about the intention of the SVDs to construct a mission seminary for the formation of Filipino SVDs, he showed particular interest in the project. Bishop Jurgens enraptured by his enthusiasm for the mission seminary narrated what he did for the realization of the venture:

When I arrived in Genoa, coming from the P.I., two of my brothers came to meet me. They desired so much to visit Rome, that I yielded to their invitation and accompanied them. At that time, however, I did not yet take up the matter, because I had decided to place the matter first before our Superior General in Scheut. Although I knew that they could not accept my

¹⁶As Fr. Gier enunciated, „Sie verstehen, daß mir und meinen Konsultoren die bewußte Bitte an und für sich recht ungelegen kam; da wir noch immer in allen Teilen der Welt an so großer Personalnot leiden und gerade die neue Mission in Indien auf Geheiß des Heiligen Stuhles noch dazu übernehmen mußten. Am liebsten hätten wir darum von vorneherein absolut negative geantwortet. Aber der außergewöhnlich günstige Eindruck, den der Bischof machte (so gemütlich und bescheiden, dabei aber ein klarer Kopf und ein Mann voll apostolischen Eifers), und noch mehr die schreiende Notlage, in der er sich mit einem so armseligen Klerus befindet, ließen es uns als Gewissenspflicht erscheinen, zur Erfüllung seiner Bitte zu tun, was uns unter den obwaltenden Verhältnissen möglich ist.“ See Gier to Buttenbruch, 30 November 1931, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959. Bishop Jurgens wrote, “Twee dagen geleden heb ik ten laatste het decreet der H. Congregatio de Seminariis ontvangen, waarin myn wordt toegestaan myn Seminarie ad decennium te sluiten. Dat deze tyd tot een decennium bepaald is, is geen bezwaar. Het is de gewoonte de H. Congregatie slechts voor een bepaalden tyd verlof te geven, om dus de gelegenheid te hebben na verloop van dien tyd te informeeren naar den toestand en dan opnieuw naargelang de omstandigheden verlenging van verlof te geven.” See Jurgens to Gier, 6 January 1932, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959.

proposal, I wished to do so as a dutiful son of that household.

I returned to Rome about Nov. the 15th. I went first to the V.R. Superior General of your esteemed Congregation. Before going I had prayed much and had asked the prayers of many others. I cannot say how happy I was when your Father General told me that he and his council accepted my proposal. I am sure that you have already received the details about this and that the V.R. Father General has written to you about it. I cannot say how grateful I feel toward God and toward the Society of the Divine Word. God has compassion on the poor souls which He confided to my care and I feel convinced that he will bless our future endeavors most abundantly.

Next I went to the H. Congregation of the Seminaries and exposed my plan of closing [down] the diocesan seminary and of introducing with your help little by little priests of your Society into the parishes, later on also Filipino members of your Society. Although my reasons were very well accepted, although I could give a really sufficient answer to all objections, the final approbation was not given so soon. The H. Congregation wished to know the opinion of His Exc. the Apostolic Delegate of the Philippines and the answer from the Philippines was delayed in some way or the other.

Finally, I went to the Holy Father and explained to His Holiness the situation of my diocese and the present plan. The Holy Father listened very attentively and approved my plan saying: *C'est un tres bon projet* (It is a very good plan). I returned to His Em. Cardinal Bisleti and told him all about the audience. The rescript was now to follow soon; nevertheless, I received this just a couple of days before leaving for the United States.

After having given the permission to close my seminary, the rescript says: *Ad cetera quod attinet Episcopus recurrat ad competentem Sacram R. Congregationem; servatis omnibus de jure servandis*

contrariis quibuscumque minime obstantibus. The Congregation of the Seminaries has of course only to decide in regard to the Seminary and left to the Congregation of the Religious the question that religious accept parishes in some dioceses. Before leaving for America I still wrote about this to your Father General, I also forwarded to him a petition for the Congregation of the Religious, but I suppose that this matter is already settled, as your Society just as our Congregation has already said the permission: you administer parishes in Nueva Segovia, in Manila. Moreover, the Holy Father did approve my plan.

I went twice to the National Director of the Opus Sancti Petri and I am glad to say that he also was very willing to help my diocese. He promised to fix everything and I shall be able to transfer the pensions to the native students of your Apostolic School.

My contract with the Rev. Fathers Dominicans expires at the end of the "cursus". I think it therefore necessary that one of these days I write to them a letter telling them about the decision which has been taken. Let us pray that everything will go off smoothly.

Many details will have to be settled, many difficulties to be solved but I trust in our good Lord, in the help of our Beloved Mother and of Little Flower. I shall stay only a few days in America and hope to sail from San Francisco about February the 8th. Of course, I am most anxious to meet you and trust that you will be in Manila during the days of my arrival.

My dear Father, let us pray much for the success of our undertaking: it is the work of God. It is a beautiful work.¹⁷

Several people wrote letters supporting the initiative of the SVD in the formation of local vocations to the religious life. H. A. Campo, the National Secretary of

¹⁷Jurgens to Battenbruch, 18 January 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in New York in his letter to Fr. Battenbruch, gave considerable emphasis on the effectiveness of fostering missionary vocations in the country: "There must be vocations for the missionary life in such a Catholic country as the Philippines and the sooner there will be zealous native missionary priests, the better it will be for the Church in the Philippines."¹⁸ Cesar Maria Guerrero, who was the Bishop of the Diocese of Lingayen, in his recommendation, testified, "It is the first institution of its kind for our Filipino youth and its need has been long felt. And though the obstacles to this pioneer undertaking will be very great, we thank God that after repeated urgings from the Philippine hierarchy the Society of the Divine Word has courageously set itself to the task."¹⁹ Santiago Sancho, who was the Bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia, also endorsed the SVD enterprise: "I desire to recommend to Your Reverence and to the General Chapter the earliest possible establishment of a Mission House for your Society in Manila, the capital of these Islands, in order that to the sons of this land, the only catholic nation in the orient, a greater impulse may be given for entering the Novitiate of the S.V.D. I promise to work, as far as I can, in behalf of this Mission House, and I bestow a heartfelt blessing upon all who shall assist this cause."²⁰

Fr. Battenbruch expressed his gratitude to Bishop Jurgens for giving his support to the project:

Please accept my sincerest thanks for your letter of June 26th. It is a great encouragement for me and gives me new zeal for our mission school and the labors in

¹⁸Campo to Battenbruch, 7 October 1929, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, Box 40, f. Christ the King Seminary: 1931-1986.

¹⁹Recommendation letter of Bishop Guerrero, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, Box 40, f. Christ the King Seminary: 1931-1986.

²⁰Sancho to Gier, 16 June 1932, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, Box 40, f. Christ the King Seminary: 1931-1986.

Your diocese. Your Excellency has no idea how my soul is engrossed with the mission school idea. Oftentimes thoughts come to discourage me as if this project could not be carried through [on] account of the depression. But with the help of Your Excellency, it can be carried out. I can but approve of Your suggestion that Your Excellency write a letter to the Holy Father asking for a loan for this undertaking. We do not need further sanction for such a loan from our General, for we already have his permission, but the permission stipulates that the rate of interest may not be over 5%.

A loan granted us by, or through our Holy Father, would be a great stimulus for us, and it would also move our General Council to grant us such funds as might yet be lacking after receiving such a loan, and it would also be an inducement for them to grant Your Excellency the requested personnel for your diocese.

I can but answer “yes”, do write to the Holy Father for a loan, and I would here mention, would it be possible to obtain a written recommendation of the Holy Father himself for our mission school? I could well make use of such a recommendation in making propaganda for our undertaking.

I also wrote Your Excellency from Vigan asking for your own recommendation in writing with a photograph. Would Your Excellency please furnish me such recommendation?

Our Regional Council here has decided that I should sail for Rome on July 4th in order that I might present our plans and need to our Father General anew, before our General Chapter convenes. In Rome, I will insist on keeping the agreement of our Society with Your Excellency, to send you one S.V.D. Father yet this year. When our General Council learns of Your Excellency’s interest and endeavors for our New Manila undertaking, I am sure that they will reciprocate and carry out their agreement.”²¹

²¹Buddenbruch to Jurgens, 1 July 1932, Manila, PAPHC, HA, Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

Bishop Jurgens was a staunch advocate of the venture: “For my own part I pledge you all the aid that in me lies, knowing as I do that this is a work of the greatest concern for the Catholic Church in the Philippines. Your Mission House shall certainly be a challenge a trumpet call that shall awaken many a vocation.”²² Peter Joseph Hurth who was bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia wrote,

It is high time: that such a Mission seminary be founded in this archipelago, so that in the near future, Filipino religious priests may also labor at the front for Holy Mother Church: that well-trained and properly educated native missionaries fill the gaps of the many orphaned parishes throughout the Islands: that missionaries may be raised up amongst this people, and of this people, who will labor incessantly that the inheritance of the true Faith, which through 300 years of arduous labors the Spanish religious missionaries brought to great prime, may be retained for this people, for the enemies of our Holy Faith are but too numerous.

It is also to be desired that Filipino religious missionaries go out to the great heathen nations of the Orient, to China and Japan. The Blessings for such enterprise and sacrifices would be strengthening of the Faith in the homeland; the Church would grow stronger; would be better able to withstand attacks and storms that may yet come over it; be better able to cope with the situation, should it ever come to pass that Europe and America be unable or prevented from sending further missionaries to these shores.

Therefore I cannot but bless this bold undertaking of erecting the first Mission House in the Philippines, and

²²Jurgens to Battenbruch, 5 July 1932, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, Box 40, f. Christ the King Seminary: 1931-1986.

beg God to grant it abundant success.²³

To reinforce the establishment of a mission seminary, Archbishop Michael James O'Doherty of Manila pointed out the conspicuous lack of Filipino membership in the Religious Orders: "I may add that the paucity of Filipino vocations is more marked in the Religious Orders than among the ranks of the Secular Clergy."²⁴

Financial Constraints

The Philippine Region at that time did not have the financial resources to defray the cost of the construction of the building as well as to pay the Hemadys the remaining balance of the value of the property. The Regional Superior sought the help of the Provincial Superior of the North American Province. Fr. Hagspiel could not lend a hand. He threw light on the financial crisis in the United States during this period:

You, in the Philippines, have no idea in what a miserable financial and economic condition the U.S. is since last September. I have written about [the] affairs here so frequently to different parts of the world that I am already sick of it; much you, no doubt, must have read in the papers. As to the loan of \$100,000, that we tried to secure for you, let me say the following: In the months of August and September, we were practically sure there would be no difficulty whatever in obtaining a loan of one hundred thousand dollars for you and of twenty thousand dollars for Monsignor Reiners in Nagoya. We tried, however, to get this total amount as

²³Recommendation letter of Archbishop Peter Joseph Hurth, 3 August 1932, Manila, PAPHC, HA, Box 40, f. Christ the King Seminary: 1931-1986. After his retirement, Peter Joseph Hurth was conferred the Titular Archbishop of Bosra.

²⁴O'Doherty to Battenbruch, Feast of the Transfiguration 1932, Manila, PAPHC, HA, Box 40, f. Christ the King Seminary: 1931-1986.

a loan, pure and simple, without any mortgage on any of our properties which so far are free from the burden of mortgage, which of course, gives us a wonderful credit in the financial world. As time went on, we found it harder and harder to obtain any big amount whatever and so finally we came to the conclusion that we could get this big loan only by taking at least a mortgage on the property at Techny. Of course we had to have permission from Rome for this purpose and we got it after a protracted correspondence, but only for \$200,000, which we found, we could not accept whatever, because if we only took a mortgage of \$200,000 on our big property, it would be impossible later on, in case of need and distress, to get a second mortgage of a much bigger amount on the same property... in the meantime we had been working for a mortgage loan and here to our great consternation and disappointment, we had to find out that absolutely no money could be had ... for the simple reason that the banks don't have the money nor is it possible to get a sufficiently great amount from individuals (the rich are bankrupt or suffered otherwise tremendous reverses). We simply have to face now the abnormal conditions that under the prevailing circumstances it is impossible to get a decent loan on such a favorable mortgage proposition as ours actually is. In other words, not until this abnormal depression period will be over.... Never in our lives have we experienced such conditions as they now exist. In Chicago alone, we have even now some 637,000 unemployed; in Chicago and Cook County included; we had over ninety bank failures, and there is no telling how much misery has come upon the people because of them.²⁵

In the meanwhile, Bishop Jurgens informed Fr. Bittenbruch about his plans concerning the eventual closure of the Seminary in Tuguegarao:

²⁵Hagspiel to Bittenbruch, 27 January 1932, Manila, PAPHC, HA, vol. New Manila.

I have announced the decision about the future closing of the Seminary to the priests of the Diocese and to the Seminarians. As far as I can judge at present, the news has been accepted well. Of course, I expect to meet with difficulties, but I trust in God's providence who has guided me so sensibly.

You can imagine that I am very anxious to have a long talk with you and I would be glad to know when it will be possible for you to come to Tuguegarao. I trust that you will not postpone this so long, not until you will make a short survey of the Diocese. Even a visit of one day would do a lot of good. I would come myself to you, but you know, how impossible for me at present. We have to talk over the loan and many other things.²⁶

In view of the financial difficulties, Fr. Bittenbruch made an earnest request to the Generalate: "Fr. Rector Bürschen still asks especially your help so that we can soon build a mission house in New Manila. The vocations are waiting for the opening of this house. It is a large sum of money that we are asking, but it is for the highest duties for the Church, and the promise we have given Bishop Jurgens that drives us to initiate the mission house. The plans are ready, the terrain is there, what is needed is money."²⁷ To work out a solution to the financial hurdles, the regional superior also sought the assistance of the SVDs in the United States, but to no avail because of the ongoing economic depression.

The Bishop dropped a line to Fr. Bittenbruch and informed him about the closure of the Seminary which was administered by the Dominicans:

I quite understand that it was impossible for you to come to Tuguegarao, as I had so much desired, and I do

²⁶Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 25 March 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

²⁷Bittenbruch to Gier and the Members of the General Council, 30 March 1932, Rome, AGSVD, *AS*, R738:1912-1959. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

appreciate your willingness of coming as soon as possible. You will be free to come after the 28th. I shall be most pleased as we have to talk over many things. I plan to give a retreat for the High School girls of Tuguegarao and surroundings, starting on the eve of the 27 and terminating on the morning of the first of May. If it is convenient for you, I should be glad to see you here on the evening of the 30th.

It is very probable that I will continue the minor Seminary for one year in Tuguegarao. The rev. Father Professors requested me to continue the Seminary at least for some time. The news of the future closure of the Seminary had come so suddenly and they also expressed the hope that the College of San Jacinto for lay students might be reopened if the Superiors had more time for preparation. After having received indirectly the approval of the Superiors of the Order regarding these proposals, I have expressed my willingness to do so and am waiting for the definite answer.

I shall be glad to have your visit and am looking forward to it. Do you plan to see some parishes in the North?²⁸

The Bishop also mentioned the reason of the closure of the minor seminary in his diocese: "I began with the implementation of my plan to reform the clergy as the first step in relation to the future establishment of the S.V.D. apostolic school that I announced the closure of my seminary."²⁹ Fr. Battenbruch was still worried about the finances. Waging an almost desperate solution to

²⁸Jurgens to Battenbruch, 17 April 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

²⁹Jurgens to Gier, 16 May 1932, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959. The quotation is a translation of the Dutch text. Bishop Jurgens wrote, "[D]it is een allerprachtigst werk welk ryke vruchten zal dragen. Inlandsche religieuze priesters zyn hier noodig en hun invloed zal groot zyn op de seculiere priesters." See Jurgens to Gier, 16 May 1932.

the fiscal crisis, he sent a telegram to the Generalate: “Techny cabled financing impossible hundred twenty thousand dollars needed immediately otherwise court proceedings have answered Techny.”³⁰ In response to the appeal of the Regional Superior concerning the financial problem, the Generalate made the recommendation to secure a loan with the Oroquieta property as mortgage. Bishop Jurgens also expressed his concern. As a gesture of support to the project of the SVDs, he proposed that the Society should try Msgr. Wilhelmus Marinus Bekkers, the Director of the Opus Sancti Petri in the Netherlands (Pontifical Work of St. Peter the Apostle which supported the formation of seminarians, novices, clergy and religious all over the world) in order to make a loan for the undertaking in New Manila, and the Bishop sent him a letter in this regard.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jose Maria Hemady of the Magdalena Estate complained about the delay of the payments: “The amount could not be paid during January, and you promised again by February, then March, and then April, and every time you made your promises, we transmitted same to the Philippine National Bank who, it seems, got tired of waiting and finally decided to take the matter to court if the amount is not paid before the 20th of the present month. As stated above, we have requested the Bank to delay any action until the money is received during this month.”³¹ In the meantime, Fr. Bittenbruch left for Tuguegarao on 11 May 1932 to meet Bishop Jurgens and requested him to obtain a loan in the Netherlands to be used for

³⁰Theodor Bittenbruch, Telegram, 17 May 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

³¹Hemady to Bittenbruch, 18 May 1932, Rome, AGSVD, *AS*, R730:1929-1935. The Philippine National Bank issued the Hemadys a loan with the SVD New Manila land as mortgage.

the erection of a mission seminary in the Philippines with the Catholic Trade School in Oroquieta as mortgage.³² On 27 June 1932, the Generalate sent a cable informing the Regional that because of financial restrictions, it was impossible to obtain money from Europe.³³

Concerning the needed money to finance the construction of the building, Bishop Jurgens made an offer to help: "I shall write from Bayombong to my brother about the same matter: the only thing which preoccupies my mind is that shares have gone down so much in value and that it is therefore so much harder to put up a guarantee."³⁴ He once again corresponded with Fr. Battenbruch and offered a glint of hope:

Your letter was forwarded to me and I received it on the first of this month; as my answer could no more reach father Superior while he was still in the Philippines, I sent the letter of recommendation to his address in Rome. Yes, indeed, I recommend this work most heartily, as I am convinced that it will yield the best fruits for the Church in the Philippines. For my own diocese I regard it as a work of greatest importance and of real necessity. While I was in Naguilian I had written a letter to Father Superior and had proposed him to request the loan for the Missionhouse from the Holy Father himself. A couple of days I received his answer and I am very glad that he accepts my proposal so enthusiastically. Deus providebit. We meet all kinds of obstacles, but God will help us out, this work will materialize. Immediately after my return to Tuguegarao I shall write the letter to the Holy Father, who was so heartily in favor of my plans and I trust that Holy Providence will take care of the rest. I shall

³²Battenbruch to Jurgens, 27 May 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

³³Telegram, 27 June 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

³⁴Jurgens to Gier, 5 July 1932, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959.

request Msgr. Eras to present the letter to His Holiness. Let us pray and ask St. Teresita to show her mighty intercession.

I am glad that the Tuguegarao seminarians made a general good impression. May the last retreat bear excellent fruits. I shall go, Deo volente, to Vigan during the last part of August, as I am anxious to talk over many details with his Exc. the Bishop and with the Fathers in charge. I regret not to be able to talk with you personally.

Be sure, dear Father, that my prayers accompany you on your voyage and that I especially recommend the interests of the General Chapter to the Holy Ghost. I trust that you will be back soon in our beloved Philippines.³⁵

On the Collaboration with Bishop Constant Jurgens

Superior General Gier informed Fr. Bürschen about the visit of Bishop Jurgens: “Msgr. Jurgens was four or five times here with me and expounded in detail the need of his diocese. I could not give him a binding promise for the very pressing lack of personnel everywhere.”³⁶ A positive response to the request of the Bishop was given in 1932. With this development, new commitments for the expansion of the SVD mission were in prospect.³⁷ In his letter to Fr. Hergesheimer, Fr.

³⁵Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 14 July 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

³⁶Gier to Bürschen, 12 January 1932, Rome, AGSVD, *AS*, R736:1924-1975. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

³⁷Fr. Gier wrote, „So fangen Sie jetzt allmählich an, in Freuden zu ernten, was die sel. PP. Beckert und Scheiermann in Pilar und auch noch die Missionare der folgenden Jahre mit Tränen ausgesät haben. Wie ganz anders sieht sich doch jetzt die Arbeit unserer Mitbrüder auf den Philippinen an als damals, wo wir auf einige arme Dörfer in Abra beschränkt waren!“ Gier to Bürschen, 12 January 1932.

Gier also informed him about the visits of Bishop Jurgens to the Generalate: "I also had very thorough discussions with Msgr. Jurgens five times and then I gave him in writing, at his request, what we can and will do to fulfill his wishes. He was very happy with it. I will send a copy to Reverend Fr. Superior and I hope that he will also be happy with it. God willing, we will send you this year 7 new priests: 2 from Techny, 2 from Argentina and 3 from St. Gabriel."³⁸

While Bishop Jurgens showed interest in the establishment of the mission house, Fr. Bittenbruch disclosed that help for Bishop Jurgens was promised under three conditions: "Bishop Jurgens wanted to have help at once. I told him that I could give him help under three conditions: a) that we have to fill in our need in the S.V.D. work in the Philippines first b) that Reverend Fr. Superior General sends us extra personnel for the work in the Diocese of Tuguegarao c) that we can build the S.V.D. mission house in Manila."³⁹ Bishop Jurgens expressed the urgency of his request: "I got no answer yet on my letter wherein I requested the help of two priests of your Society for this year. I asked answer by cable. I trust that you will do all your best to obtain this at once. You realize the difficulty of my position. I would like to show to my priests that what I have said is true and that your Society accepted my proposals as it really

³⁸Gier to Hergesheimer, 24 February 1932, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Concerning the encounter with Bishop Jurgens, Fr. Gier recounted, „Msgr. Jurgens kam oft zu uns und machte einen vortrefflichen Eindruck, so einfach und gemütlich und dabei sehr intelligent und von apostolischem Eifer erfüllt, man merkte immer wieder klar, er weiß, was er will und es kommt ihm nur darauf an, durch Hebung seines armen Klerus die anvertrauten Seelen zu retten.“ See Gier to Hergesheimer, 24 February 1932.

³⁹Bittenbruch to Gier, 19 March 1932, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

did. Please help me, I need them so badly. I again trust that you will work hard for the two brothers who are able to do cement construction work; it is another crying need. Please, do your very best. My present Pastoral Visit convinces me more and more that the diocese is one of the very finest missionfields in the world.”⁴⁰ Fr. Bittenbruch requested Bishop Jurgens to secure a loan for the Society because the prospective mission seminary would provide missionaries for the SVD missions to be established in the Diocese of Tuguegarao. Bishop Jurgens already showed interest for the request and told the regional superior that he would write to his brothers about it. In the meantime, Fr. Gier notified the Bishop that he would appoint SVDs in 1932, and the regional superior could then assign some of them to the Diocese of Tuguegarao.⁴¹

Bishop Jurgens once again expressed his interest in the establishment of the Mission House:

On the first of this month I received the letter of father B[ü]rschen together with the letter of recommendation for the Mission House. As you were leaving on the second of this month my letter could no more reach you and I send this to Rome. How heartily do I recommend this undertaking! I have again three young priests under investigation for immorality and I fear much that the charges will be true. It is heartrending and a reform through the formation of

⁴⁰Jurgens to Gier, 5 July 1932, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959.

⁴¹Fr. Gier wrote, “Quapropter coactum me video, in illa persistere sententia, quam Excellentiae Vestrae proposui in litteris Romae datis die 30 Novembris superioris anni. ‘Si Deus voluerit, anno 1932 itemque singulis annis sequentibus sex vel septem sacerdotes novelli in Philippinas dirigentur. Ex quorum numero si Superior Regionalis potuerit et voluerit quosdam Excellentiae Vestrae assignare, libenter consentimus.’” See Gier to Jurgens, 24 June 1932, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935.

religious priests is absolutely necessary; I am convinced that it is the effective means to better conditions.⁴²

Bishop Jurgens pointed out what would be the role of religious priests in his Diocese:

When I look at my Diocese, I am firmly convinced that religious priests who are formed in your Society, will be the measure for the reform of my clergy. With a bleeding heart, I have to admit to you that the reform is absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, many of the younger priests follow the poor example of the elderly [priests] and, although the elderly [priests] have returned from their bad ways, this is all the reason that the people have largely lost their reverence and trust for their priests. The only way to improve this situation and win thousands and thousands of souls for God is the formation of religious priests. The spiritual formation during the novitiate, the vigilance and guidance of older confreres later during the ministry will accomplish this with God's mercy.⁴³

On that same day, Bishop Jurgens penned a letter to Fr. Bittenbruch:

The original letter I sent to Monsignor Eras, Rector of the Collegio Olandese, procurator of the Dutch Bishops and my friend. He lives in Via Salvator Rosa, San Saba, not far from the house of your Society. Please go and visit him. I did not explain to the Holy Father the details, the conditions of the loan, but referred to you. Neither did I request a letter of recommendation because it did not fit in so well with my letter, but I requested Msgr. Eras to ask this to the Holy Father.

I made a letter for my brother, making proposals about the security for the loan in regard with my

⁴²Jurgens to Gier, 5 July 1932.

⁴³Jurgens to Hoogerwaard Algemeene Overste en zeer eerwaarde Leden von het Kapittel de Societeit Verbi Divini, 6 August 1932, PAPHC, HA, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao. The quotation is a translation of the Dutch text.

personal capital, but I am sorry to say that after mature deliberation I did not send it. You will not doubt my most hearty interest in the realization of the Mission House: it is my first intention in all my prayers, and I would be willing, if needed, to make any reasonable sacrifice for its realization, but my own capital is not so large. Had I not invested, prior to our plans, so much in connection with the College of the Sisters in New Manila, I could perhaps find a way, but when I looked at the remainder of my capital together with the depreciation of the shares, it seems impossible to arrange this with my brother with one simple letter and not without writing and answering and writing again. Moreover, the loan is a long-term loan and I would hereby tie up my capital for more than my lifetime and be unable to do other works. You will understand that this is not unwillingness, *procul absit*.⁴⁴

Bishop Jurgens also sent a letter supporting the project: “After praying I have come to the following conclusions: the missionhouse is the will of God: the repeated declarations of the Holy Father indicate this clearly; so then we must carry that out as far as we can possibly do so. It seems impossible to obtain a loan in Europe and America, therefore I will personally grant the loan as far as I possibly can do.”⁴⁵ In another letter he wrote, “My dear Father, I feel convinced that God is with us and that your Society will do an immense good if it carries out the wish, the command of the Holy Father. I am so grateful to God for your determination to carry out this splendid work.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 6 August 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

⁴⁵Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 1 December 1932, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

⁴⁶Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 5 December 1932, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

The desperate need to secure financial assistance to pay off the remaining balance of the land was further aggravated by the Philippine National Bank's insistence on the payments on the part of the Society. In the meanwhile, Fr. Bittenbruch wrote to the German Currency Control Commission in Berlin with a recommendation from the German consulate in Manila. He mentioned this course of action in his letter to Mr. Hemady: "Now, may I ask you, to wait for the answer of the Currency Control Commission and according to the reply and favor, this Commission would give us to export money from Germany, I would place the allowance in your hand. As long as I do not receive from the Currency Control Commission I cannot give you a date when I could pay my debts to you. The P.N. Bank ought to have an understanding of the 'force majeure' of the situation of Germany as well as in many other nations. The Society of the Divine Word is able to pay and being a religious Society, she will pay, but we should take into consideration the very abnormal times."⁴⁷ Fr. Bittenbruch dispatched a letter to the Superior General about his concern if an immediate remedy was not conceived:

It is frightening that the National Bank is pursuing us in writing. The last one [letter] is dated 2 January 193[3]: 'We feel we have waited long enough for the settlement of this account, and unless specific arrangements are made for its liquidation in the earlier part of next year, we believe we shall be justified in foreclosing the mortgage executed in your favor on December 2, 1929 and assigned to this bank on July 31, 1931.' We have to pay the interest to Mr. [José Maria] Hemady on 15 May.... I am writing this matter today because I cannot often sleep when I think of the great

⁴⁷Bittenbruch to Hemady, 7 January 1933, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

responsibility and of the consequences if we do not pay the interest on 15 May.⁴⁸

The situation had worsened as expressed by Fr. Hergesheimer in a letter to Fr. Grendel:

It is regrettable that Mr. Hemady has lost his confidence in the SVD: so many promises, letters, cable messages, and at the end of last year, an offer of the method of payment to the bank in Germany; and this does not seem to work. Unfortunately, he does not believe us anymore. Fr. Regional Bittenbruch is now a persona non grata by this man and his wife, Gemahlin the Doña Magdalena [Ysmael Hemady], has already been hostile to him from the beginning when Fr. Superior built the famous 'steel house' in a frantic race to have ₱20,000 cancelled from the contract. He lost. Resentment, however, remains in these people. We must now rightly be ashamed to set our eyes on them.⁴⁹

The foregoing financial concern disturbed the Regional Superior. To encourage him, the Bishop remarked that "financial reasons hold us back to put up the Mission House-building, but we can start the Mission House, that is to say the formation of a religious clergy, the extension of your Society for the Filipinos: I am willing to buy the Seminary of Tuguegarao and offer it to your Society in order to use it temporarily as their Mission House."⁵⁰ Fr. Hagspiel could not offer financial assistance: "It would be a pity indeed if you had to give up New Manila completely. Is it really not the will of God that we should keep it? We have prayed and

⁴⁸Bittenbruch to Grendel, 8 January 1933, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁴⁹Hergesheimer to Grendel, 18 February 1933, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁵⁰Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 20 February 1933, Manila, PAPHC, HA, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

worked to the best of our ability to get a big loan here, not only to help ourselves but you likewise, but all our efforts were in vain and will most probably remain in vain along these lines.”⁵¹ When the creditors, however, saw that a building was being constructed in the property, they could not believe that the Society did not have the money to pay them.

Mr. Rafael Corpus, President of the Philippine National Bank, sent a dispatch to the Regional Superior: “We have a report from the Magdalena Estate, Inc. to the effect that your account with them for the purpose of a big tract of land in New Manila covered by document of sale dated April 10, 1931, is very much overdue as shown by the attached statement. As this account has been assigned to us by the Magdalena Estate, Inc., we are writing this to request you to advise us when we may expect payment of this account.”⁵² Failure to pay the bank meant foreclosure of the mortgage within two weeks. As a consequence, the Society would not only lose the property in New Manila but also the Catholic Trade School in Manila. Fr. Hagspiel held out to the Regional Superior a flicker of hope:

I think I have some good news for you. You know that Frank Murphy, the former mayor of Detroit, was appointed the new Governor General of the Philippines. Two days before he left Detroit for the Islands I succeeded in getting an appointment with him through the intervention of Bishop Gallagher and his chancery in Detroit.... Mr. Murphy is a real Irishman, only forty years old, and single; he's known as a splendid orator and a quick, efficient worker. As I was introduced to him by His Excellency's secretary, Mr. Hill, a

⁵¹Hagspiel to Bittenbruch, 1 May 1933, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Hagspiel.

⁵²Corpus to Bittenbruch, 3 May 1933, Rome, AGSVD, *AS*, R730:1929-1935.

Protestant, (but one of the finer type of Protestants), I presented to His Excellency a copy of my book on the Philippines, which he said he would read on his trip to Manila, and told him briefly on the work of our missionaries and of our Society in the Islands.⁵³

In his letter to Fr. Hagspiel, Governor General Frank Murphy wrote, "I want you to know of my appreciation of your visit to Detroit and of my real regret that I was so busy that it was impossible for me to have more time with you. I realize that you went a great deal of trouble to see me and I am honestly sorry that our interview was so brief.... [I] shall look forward to the letter you said you would write me presenting your problem in detail. You may be sure that I wish to co-operate in every way that I can."⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Bishop Jurgens informed Fr. Battenbruch about the loan amounting to ₱60,000 which he obtained from the Netherlands. He immediately notified him about it and instructed him to send a copy of the prescribed mortgage together with the draft of the proposed agreements between him and the Society. The Bishop was also informed about the situation between the Society and Mr. Hemady who was not satisfied with the explanation concerning the foreign exchange ban which was imposed by the German government. Mr. Hemady insisted on his demands and indirectly threatened that he would press charges against the Society. Bishop Jurgens came to the rescue.

The Regional Council decided to accept the loan from the bishop with the condition to use the amount of ₱33,000 to pay the Philippine National Bank. The

⁵³Hagspiel to Battenbruch, 17 May 1933, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Hagspiel.

⁵⁴See Murphy to Hagspiel, 27 May 1933, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Hagspiel. Frank Murphy (1891-1949) from Michigan was Catholic. He was the mayor of Detroit before he became the Governor General of the Philippines (1933-1935).

bishop, upon learning that Fr. Battenbruch returned from Europe on 9 May 1933, inquired whether the latter received the money from the Netherlands. Fr. Battenbruch wrote, “The good bishop, who had promised his money *only* for the *Mission House*, gave [the loan] after a long hesitation. And so we could pay the interest and satisfy our creditors first.”⁵⁵ Bishop Jurgens met with Mr. Hemady and agreed that 33,000 pesos of his money – which was meant for the house – be used to pay the creditors.

The bishop also inquired whether the construction of the building began already: “I am anxious to write to the Holy Father and thus to give him joy. Most hearty thanks for your prayers during the novena to the Holy Ghost and in return I wish to assure you that the Mission House and the Noviciate [*sic*] are the daily object of my prayers.”⁵⁶ As the financial worries continued to hound him, Fr. Battenbruch dispatched a letter to the Bishop: “Altho’ I should feel ashamed, I frankly decided to come again to Your Excellency to get your blessing and final help. There is no other way, and no other person who could really bring this project to a fact than your Excellency. Your Excellency pushed the work going to our Superior General and asking the Holy Father for His approval; and then when we found the tremendous difficulties with securing the building funds, we again received your help and my private audience with His holiness who commended me to build the Missionhouse as the most important work in the P.I., this again I owe it to Your Excellency. So I feel

⁵⁵Buttenbruch to the Generalate, 12 July 1933, Manfred Müller Papers (MMPs). The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁵⁶Jurgens to Buttenbruch, 7 June 1933, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959.

confident that you will grant us this great and last favor.”⁵⁷

Fr. Bittenbruch knew full well that the realization of the project depended on the Generalate in Rome: “Although the building fund is covered by borrowing and by our current revenue, the start of the construction depends on the conditions which only the Generalate can meet, that is, the grant can only be guaranteed by Rome. The solution to our financial crises is subject to the fulfillment of these conditions.”⁵⁸ Fr. Bittenbruch conveyed the gravity of the situation:

These sources will continue to remain closed to us as it was unfortunately the case for more than a year, so a financial catastrophe in our Region is inevitable whether we build or not because by a negative decision we have to repay the money to Msgr. Jurgens and we do not know how to prevent bankruptcy without foreign help. As stated above, the terrible seriousness of our situation is clear and we would like on behalf of all confreres in the Philippines to kindly request the Generalate to prevent, through extraordinary help, a bankruptcy that would destroy a major part of the work in the past 25 years.⁵⁹

The Regional Council held a meeting in New Manila from 10-13 July and decided unanimously that the proposed construction of a mission house would also become the central house of the Society.⁶⁰ The transfer of the central house of the Society from Oroquieta to

⁵⁷Bittenbruch to Jurgens, 23 June 1933, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

⁵⁸Bittenbruch to the Members of the General Council, 12 July 1933, MMPs. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁵⁹Bittenbruch to the Members of the General Council, 12 July 1933. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁶⁰Bittenbruch to the Members of the General Council, 12 July 1933.

New Manila was recommended for the following reasons:

1. For three years now, the expensive property, which also spends so much interest annually, remains useless.
2. Our Society here in the Philippines with fifty priests and fifteen brothers necessarily needs a central house for the growing community, for confreres who travel and a place where new missionaries can stay to prepare themselves for missionary work. Our buildings in Manila and New Manila are unfortunately too small and inappropriate for a religious community. No religious Order stands so poor with respect to housing like the members of the SVD. It is a fact that it is a constant threat to the good spirit and religious life.
3. The central house will be connected with the mission house which the highest ecclesiastical authority (Pope Pius XI [Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti]) described as our most important task in the Philippines.
4. Our relationship with Bishop Jurgens compels us to fulfill our promise in the near future.
5. We should take advantage of the current circumstances and the reasonable prices of building materials.⁶¹

On 27 July 1933, Fr. Bittenbruch wrote to Mr. Hemady on the construction of the building,

With this letter I am going to write you some confidential information about our Seminary building which I promised you to start very soon. Since I paid a visit to you and Mrs. Hemady, I tried to come to an agreement with our German Architect. But the estimate of the building costs was too high and I decided to postpone the project. Then, I was called to Tuguegarao and you know very well how interested the Right Reverend Bishop Jurgens is in this institution. He advised me to change the architect and give the building to Mr. Karolschuck, who is working on the Belgian church of Paco at present. This new architect

⁶¹Bittenbruch to the Members of the General Council, 12 July 1933. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

then worked out other plans of a much cheaper estimate. Bishop Jurgens urges me to start the building immediately. But I remember that I would show you our plans and to give you an opportunity to bid on the building. Although Mr. Karolschuck is very interested to be the contractor for this seminary, I would like to comply with my promise and ask you to give me your estimate. I enclose herewith the plans and specifications. I am satisfied with a rough estimate and I would ask you to rush your answer, as I have to decide the building bids tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock, i.e., July 28, 1933.⁶²

The financial worries of the Regional Superior were far from over. Even the North American Province of the Society could not provide financial support.⁶³ On 4 August 1933, the construction of the building of the mission seminary began with the SVD Brothers taking a major role. Br. Arnulf Rademacher supervised the work. The furnishings were taken care of by Br. Richard (Heinrich Hütte). Fr. Bürschen acknowledged the invaluable contribution of Bishop Jurgens in the realization of the undertaking: "It is a happy double blessing that the procure of the Belgian Fathers, where Bishop Jurgens stays when he comes to Manila, is just across from our mission house which is still under construction and so he can see his 'life's work', which he has put so much hope, and hear the chants of the SVD seminarians

⁶²Buttenbruch to Hemady, 27 July 1933, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

⁶³Grendel to Buttenbruch, 27 July 1933, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Letters of Superior General II.

from his room.”⁶⁴

How to get the needed financial support for the ongoing project was still a major concern for the Regional Superior. Fr. Bittenbruch was told to make a request to the Opus Sancti Petri (Pontifical Work of St. Peter the Apostle) in Rome. In his letter to Bishop Jurgens, he wrote,

Your Excellency would expect from me the request for a recommendation letter for the Holy Father or for the Cardinal [Carlo] Salotti, the president of the Opus Sancti Petri in Rome, which I mentioned in Manila to you. But, I thought it over and I agree to the suggestion of your Excellency to write, first for information to Msgr. Eras, asking him how to proceed in order to gain result from the Opus Sancti Petri. I would remain very grateful to you if you would do this favor for me. A Mission Seminary is, and will remain a great financial burden and we should secure a financial basis in order to have the blessing and result with this so very important enterprise. As far as I know, the Opus Sancti Petri does not require security-papers as the banks do; here it is the Bishop in whom they place all their confidence. And as I have the approval of the highest Superior of our Society, therefore the Bishop would not endanger himself, to head this loan for the mentioned purpose.

Here I come with my great request. Would your Excellency not be willing to try this way in order to secure the loan? It would mean for me the greatest blessing and I would be free from the great heavy financial burden. And we could throw open the doors of the Mission Seminary, even to the poorest boy, in order

⁶⁴Bürschen to Grendel, 6 August 1933, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R736:1924-1975. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Bishop Jurgens supported the establishment of a mission house by allowing his own seminarians who opted to join the Society of the Divine Word to enter the SVD seminary. See Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 30 September 1933, Manila, PAPHC, HA, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

to educate him and make him a religious priest. It would mean that we would have a financially sound basis for the whole enterprise.⁶⁵

In the meanwhile, K.H. Hemady, who owned the estate which was purchased by the SVDs, wrote to Fr. Buttenbruch,

I have just received a letter from the Philippine National Bank, enclosing a copy of a letter received by them from the Deutsche Bank Und Disconto-Gesellschaft, Filiale Hamburg, in which they stated that there are no foreign exchange regulations existing at present in Germany which forbid the entry and disposal of U.S. dollars on free accounts of foreigners held in Germany. So it shows clearly that if your Rev. Superior General Father Josef Grendel send the money from Rome to the Deutsche Bank Und Disconto-Gesellschaft Filiale Hamburg, there will be no trouble in disposing of the money in favor of the Philippine National Bank of Manila.⁶⁶

True to his word, Bishop Jurgens secured a loan to defray the cost of the ongoing building project. He transmitted his reply to the letter of Fr. Buttenbruch:

Please find herewith enclosed a cheque of ₱6000 – a loan to pay your obligations with the architect, etc. It would be good to send soon the receipt of this amount, expressing the conditions under which it was received; also for the former ₱20,000. It is pleasant when such things suffer no delay then our books keep in order.

With regard to your request for what possible help I could give with respect to a loan from Opus St. Petri or other sources, I am of course most willing, but I see

⁶⁵Buttenbruch to Jurgens, 14 November 1933, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959.

⁶⁶Hemady to Buttenbruch, 17 November 1933, PAPHC, HA, vol. New Manila.

several difficulties: nevertheless let us place our full confidence in Divine Providence.⁶⁷

Fr. Bittenbruch and Fr. Georg Puder signed a document concerning the loan of P26,000.00: "I, the undersigned superior of the Society of the Divine Word in the Philippines, declare herewith, that I received P26,000 from his Excellency, the right Rev. C. Jurgens as a loan, under the following conditions. The P6,000 I received at the end of the month of November and I promise to return this P6,000 in the month of July of 1934 and pay 3% interest. The P20,000 I received at the end of October and I promised to return this P20,000 after three years and pay 7% interest.⁶⁸ In another letter Hemady further mentioned some information from the Deutsche Bank relating to the transfer of money:

We have yesterday received another letter from the Philippine National Bank, enclosing a letter which they just received from the Deutsche Bank Und Disconto-Gesellschaft Filiale Hamburg, which we copy as follows: 'Dear Sirs: Further to our letter of October 10, 1933, we beg to inform you that we received today a letter of the Reverend Superior General Father Joseph Grendel in reply to ours of Oct. 10, stating that he was quite aware of the possibility to pay in Dollar – amounts with us for

⁶⁷Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 20 November 1933, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959. Fr. Grendel had this to say about Bishop Jurgens: „An Msgr. Jurgens lege ich Ihnen einige Zeilen bei; wollen Sie ihm dieselben bitte übermitteln. Überaus freue ich mich, dass Sie mit dem Hochst. Herrn so gut bekannt geworden sind, und dass er soviel Vertrauen und Wohlwollen für unsere Mitbrüder dort hat. Er ist ein überaus klarer und kluger Kopf und ein Mann von höchster Energie, wie ich selber wahrgenommen habe, wie er hier war. Für seine Hilfe in finanzieller Beziehung können wir ihm nicht dankbar genug sein.“ See Grendel to Bittenbruch, 2 March 1934, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935.

⁶⁸Bittenbruch and Puder to Jurgens, 10 December 1933, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

your account without restrictions, but that there are no Dollar amounts at his disposal. In case, the payments for their independent province on the Philippine Islands could be effected only in Reichsmarks. Such remittances in favor of foreign accounts, however, are only allowed, according to present legislation, with special consent of the German Currency Control Commission.'

If the only obstacle to obtain a special consent of the German Currency Control Commission in Germany is the foregoing reason, we think that your Rev. Father Superior General Joseph Grendel can obtain same by stating the important reason that more than P200,000.00 had been invested in the land and building, and in order to avoid the loss of this amount, the balance should be paid. This is a very important reason which, in our belief, would not be overlooked by the German Currency Control Commission.⁶⁹

Fr. Bittenbruch explained the underlying circumstances which brought about the delay of payments:

In answer to your inquiry, I wish to state that there is no restriction for the banks of Germany to accept money from foreign countries, but the Government laid an embargo on money leaving Germany.

You are well-informed, that we belong to the Society of the Divine Word with the financial resources in Germany. The headquarters of the Society are stationed in Rome, as this is the custom in the Roman Catholic Church to have the headquarters of religious orders in the Eternal City.

It is, probably, a misunderstanding on the part of the bank, that they forgot that we have our resources in Germany and that we are bound by law, not to send our

⁶⁹Hemady to Bittenbruch, 24 November 1933, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

money out of Germany in order to pay you the debt for the property in New Manila.⁷⁰

The remaining balance of the property was not yet fully paid, and Mr. Hemady informed Fr. Bittenbruch about an imminent foreclosure of the mortgage: “We are in receipt of a letter from the Philippine National Bank, reading in part as follows: ‘We feel we have waited long enough for the settlement of this account, and unless specific arrangements are made for its liquidation in the earlier part of next year, we believe we shall be justified in foreclosing the mortgage executed in your favour on December 2, 1929, and assigned to this bank on July 31, 1931.’”⁷¹ In the meanwhile, the construction of the building was underway. Fr. Bittenbruch gave an account of the progress of the work:

The building goes on nicely, and I am assured that we can begin the Missionhouse next June. The only difficulty is the floor slab. As the Good Shepherd Sisters complained so much about the sinking of the filling of their house, I rather prefer to have a first class reinforced slab placed into our building. This slab will stand any weight and I think this is very important for an institution of learning. The architect made the estimate for this work and figured the expenses at P16,000. This is too much for me and I will leave the ground floor in natural condition and have the second and third floor ready for use next June. The ground floor has to wait until a benefactor will send me the P16,000.⁷²

⁷⁰Bittenbruch to Hemady, 7 December 1933, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

⁷¹Hemady to Bittenbruch, 2 January 1934, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila.

⁷²Bittenbruch to Jurgens, 16 February 1934, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

Through his classmate at St. Wendel in Germany, Fr. Hugo Bücking, Fr. Bittenbruch tried to get a loan in France but was rebuked by the Superior General. Mr. Hemady forewarned Fr. Bittenbruch that the President of the Philippine National Bank would hand the papers to the lawyers if arrangements for the liquidation of the account were not made by the end of the month. He further advised the Regional Superior, "As you can see, the Bank has now definitely decided to hand the papers to their attorneys unless a substantial payment is made by you on or before the end of the present month. Therefore, we earnestly request that at least ₱100,000.00 be paid within the next two weeks in order to avoid court proceedings which will cost you not less than 25,000.00 for attorney's fees."⁷³ A telegram was dispatched to Rome: "Bank presses two week payment threatens foreclosure personal interview president granted two months help immediately letter follows."⁷⁴ Since the Regional Superior was not in Manila at that time, Fr. Josef Klekamp answered the letter of Mr. Hemady:

As Very Rev. Father Superior is at present in Abra on his official visit I am answering your letter in his name. Referring to our conversation and the visit we made to the President of the Philippine National Bank, I want to state once more that there is no way to get money out of Germany and that we tried every possibility that seemed to exist, but [to] no avail.

Furthermore, I want to state that [until now it] was impossible to secure a loan in one of the European countries or in the States due to the fact that we can offer only securities which are within the boundaries of Germany. We ourselves surely are interested more than anyone else in such a loan as such, a loan if it could

⁷³Hemady to Bittenbruch, 14 April 1934, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935.

⁷⁴Telegram, 17 April 1934, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935.

only be procured would hardly cost us more than six percent interest and might even be as low as four percent.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned facts we received a letter from our headquarters at Rome that they intended to start negotiations [anew] to secure a loan in Holland. This letter we received about ten days ago. But as I stated in our conversation I do not think [there is] sufficient time to bring these negotiations to a successful end if the Bank does not grant 2-3 months more. In accordance with our conversation I cabled to Rome as follows: BANK PRESSES TWO WEEK PAYMENT THREATENS FORECLOSURE PERSONAL INTERVIEW PRESIDENT GRANTED TWO MONTHS HELP IMMEDIATELY LETTER FOLLOWS.⁷⁵

Notwithstanding the financial worries of the Regional Superior, Fr. Bruno Hagspiel in his letter to Fr. Bittenbruch put in a good word for the latter's efforts: "How glad I am to know that your central of the S.V.D. is progressing. You have undertaken the whole building operation, because the Holy Father told you to do so, and thus we all hope and pray that God's blessing be and remain upon it."⁷⁶

⁷⁵Klekamp to Hemady, 17 April 1934, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila. Germany imposed stringent currency controls that impeded the transfer of money from Germany to other countries. This measure greatly affected the missions of the SVD around the world because Germany was the main source of the funding for the missions of the Society.

⁷⁶Hagspiel to Bittenbruch, 19 April 1934, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Hagspiel.

Intervention of Gov. General Frank Murphy

In a letter to the President of the Philippine National Bank, Fr. Battenbruch gave the reasons for the delay of the payment of the property:

The Society of the Divine Word obliged itself by contract to pay Mr. Hemady for the property bought in New Manila [in the amount of] 210,000 [pesos] on December 2, 1931. Up to this date the mentioned Society is unable to comply with the contract and the greatest obstacle is the Currency Control Commission established in Germany since 1931. This Currency Control Commission does not allow any German citizen to withdraw from his bank money to be sent into a foreign country unless it be used up for his living support only and it may not exceed the amount of 200 marks monthly. This Currency Control [Commission] does not allow [the] transfer [of] money of a German citizen from the deposit of his bank in favor of your correspondent bank in Hamburg. This restriction law prevents us, up to this date, to pay our obligations.⁷⁷

After giving details of the reasons why the Society could not fulfill its obligations, Fr. Battenbruch proposed the following: “1) to try to get a loan from Holland. Our Very Rev. Superior General residing in Rome, Italy is still working for a loan in our favor and has good hopes to reach a successful conclusion. 2) I, the Superior of the Society, sent an official request, together with a recommendation of the German Consul of this City, to the President of the Currency Control Commission at Berlin, Germany in order to get a special permission to withdraw from our bank in Germany the

⁷⁷Buttenbruch to the President of the Philippine National Bank, 27 April 1934, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. New Manila. The total price of the property was 320,000.00 pesos. The first installment was paid in the amount of 110,000.00, hence the balance of 210,000.00

money needed to cover our debts. If all our efforts fail, then, I promise: 1) to pay regularly, as I did in the past, the interest of the capital of P210,000. 2) to begin with paying off the capital, i.e., P25,000.00 yearly, beginning the 1st of July of 1935.”⁷⁸ This situation prompted Fr. Bittenbruch to have recourse to Governor General Frank Murphy who at that time was recuperating in Baguio City. The Regional Superior, accompanied by Fr. Bürschen, paid the Governor General a visit in order to make an appeal. He had this to say about the encounter:

But what fear I had to put up with. The [Philippine] National Bank really wanted to impound us. I received a letter from the Bank with the condition: either pay or in 14 days I will bring the matter to court. What should I do now? Then I remembered your conversation and the letter from the Governor General. I received these orders in Baguio, and Governor Murphy was also in Baguio. I, together with Fr. Bürschen, went to see him – it was said that he was not feeling well – and yet we were received at 5:30 P.M. He lay in bed and wanted to help us. I showed him first his letter which he wrote to you on the ship. And then I showed him the letter from the Bank. At the spur of the moment, he said to me: ‘Father, I am not the Director of the Bank; but I tell you, you go to the Secretary of Finance and tell him that I sent you to arrange this matter with the Bank.’ Then he told me that he would see the Secretary on the following Friday and he would then personally recommend our cause. ‘Be rest assured I shall help you.’ These words still ring in my ears.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Bittenbruch to President of the Philippine National Bank, 27 April 1934, vol. New Manila.

⁷⁹Bittenbruch to Hagspiel, 15 May 1934, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Fr. Bürschen also narrated the same encounter with the Governor General in his letter to the Superior General. See Bürschen to Grendel, 22 May 1934, MMPs. Fr. Bürschen wrote, „Hemady schuldet der Bank u. hat auf unsere Versprechen u. Schulden hin sein Geld von der Bank erhalten, das die Bank heraushaben will.

After their meeting with the Governor General, Fr. Bittenbruch entered into an agreement with the Finance Secretary, who was also the Chairman of the Board of the Philippine National Bank, to pay the interest on 15 May 1934 and to pay ₱25,000 for the succeeding years. The Society also had to pay the 8% interest. The Secretary agreed, but he asked the Regional Superior to secure a loan, which he did. The Director of the Bank had already received the approval from the highest authority, and he was very friendly and took the same conditions which Fr. Bittenbruch had agreed upon with the Finance Secretary. Fr. Bittenbruch could only express a sigh of relief: "I was relieved from a heavy burden. And I am very grateful to you for your great help because you have enabled us to establish a connection with the Governor General. We will be inviting the whole family of the Governor General during the blessing and inauguration which will take place in October."⁸⁰ Governor General Murphy visited Christ the King Mission Seminary on 6 January 1935. The Society finally paid the Philippine National Bank the remainder of its debt during the Second World War.⁸¹

Wenn Hemady es nicht aufbringen kann, dann greift er zum Aeussersten u. geht zum Gerichte von der Bank getrieben. Die Drohungen sind ja schon alt, die bald von der Bank bald von Hemady kamen; aber vor einem Monat wurden sie so drohend, dass je ein Kabel u. Brief das nachher berichtet haben. P. Regional u. Ich nahmen dann unsere Zuflucht zur hoechsten Autoritaet zum Generalgovernor Frank Murphy; der Gott sei dank ein praktischer guter Katholik ist u. der Kirche hilft wo er nur kann." See Bürschen to Grendel, 22 May 1934.

⁸⁰Bittenbruch to Hagspiel, 15 May 1934, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730:1929-1935. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁸¹See Müller, *The Founding of Christ the King Mission Seminary*, 124n.

SVD Missionary Engagement in Cagayan

Fr. Battenbruch in his competency as Regional Superior sought for the realization of the establishment of a seminary for the formation of Filipino SVD candidates by requesting the authorization of the Superior General. After receiving the necessary permission, his next concern was how to obtain the necessary funding for the acquisition of a property in New Manila as well as how to defray the cost of the construction of the building. Bishop Jurgens expressed his support for the project.

Let me first tell you that I was so grateful to the Holy Father for having called you and expressed His wish in regard to the Missionhouse. We know now the will of God and we must go ahead. The letter to Father Rector shows you that I am going ahead. I think that I better ask my brothers first to help me. I am sure that the Bank mentioned would give the loan if I put up the guarantees, but the trouble is just in putting up the guarantees: if one puts up a guarantee in shares and a little later the shares drop in value, the Bank will ask so many more shares and probably more than I possess. I prefer to be in the hands of my brothers, than in the hands of the Bank. I feel most confident that my brothers will do what I asked. I trust to have an answer very soon, as I asked the answer on my letter by cable. As I say I want to go ahead, and you said that you desire to begin the building as soon as possible: that is why I am so desirous for your return to the Philippines. WE SHOULD START NEXT YEAR. If you must not do special propaganda work for the maintenance of the Missionhouse, I should like to see you back very soon.

Yes, I trust that your Society will give me priests next year without any failure. I should be grateful, then plans will begin to be realized. Please, for heaven's sake do so; you know how I have spoken about it, let us show that it is true. Moreover, I need the priests so badly.

My dear Father, I feel convinced that God is with us and that your Society will do an immense good if it carries out the wish, the command of the Holy Father. I am so grateful to God for your determination to carry out this splendid work.⁸²

Bishop Jurgens, having been informed about the predicament of the SVDs, proposed that he would help make loans needed for the project and in return the Society would send SVD missionaries to his diocese. It was the bishop's desire to have priests who belonged to religious congregations to work in his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. He also envisioned that Filipino priests who had their formation in their respective religious congregations would take charge of the parishes in Cagayan. He was the key figure in the foundation of the SVD mission in the Diocese of Tuguegarao.⁸³ The Regional Council, during its meeting on 13 and 22 May 1933, discussed the proposal in which Bishop Jurgens would secure a loan of sixty thousand pesos with 5% interest for the construction of the seminary building and with the Catholic Trade School in Manila as collateral for the loan and in return the Society would provide SVD missionaries for his diocese.⁸⁴

Having accepted the offer of Bishop Jurgens, Fr. Battenbruch reminded the Superior General regarding

⁸²Jurgens to Battenbruch, 5 December 1932, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

⁸³The Diocese of Tuguegarao included the civil provinces of Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela, Cagayan and the Babuyan and Batanes islands. Bishop Maurice Foley, an American, was the first bishop of the diocese when it was erected in 1910. He was transferred to the Diocese of Jaro in 1916. Bishop Santiago Sancho succeeded him. When Bishop Sancho was transferred to Vigan in 1927, Bishop Constant Jurgens became his successor. Bishop Jurgens resigned as bishop of the Diocese of Tuguegarao on 6 May 1950.

⁸⁴Manfred Müller, "The Entry of the Society of the Divine Word into Cagayan 1933," *Ilocos Review* 15 (1983): 65.

the commitment made by the Society to the bishop: “We must also begin in the Diocese of Tuguegarao this year which we ourselves have committed in writing, that is, the Generalate sent Bishop Jurgens such a document.”⁸⁵ In order to expedite the realization of the project, Fr. Bittenbruch prepared the draft of the contract between the Society and the bishop: “I am sending you a draft of the contract with his Excellency Bishop Jurgens. We must start in his diocese this year and send him two missionaries. Thus, the Regional Council, together with Bishop Jurgens, has agreed to the conditions set down in the contract. We are in favor of these stipulations; so far no bishop in the Philippines has offered us such good working conditions.”⁸⁶ Fr. Bittenbruch further wrote, “I am beseeching your Reverence to examine these conditions, and you can also make the necessary corrections. I am also requesting your authorization for this contract.”⁸⁷ These negotiations between the Bishop of Tuguegarao and the Society of the Divine Word were concluded with a two-page document written in Latin by the General Council. The contract was valid for twenty years which was renewable at the discretion of the bishop. In December 1933, Bishop Jurgens received a copy of the contract. He sent a letter to the Superior General in which he introduced a phrase in the contract regarding the number of missionaries to be assigned to his diocese. The clause was inserted in the contract

⁸⁵Bittenbruch to Grendel, 26 June 1933, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R736:1924-1975. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁸⁶Bittenbruch to Grendel, 11 July 1933, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁸⁷Bittenbruch to Grendel, 11 July 1933. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

during the bishop's visit to Rome.⁸⁸ In the conclusion of the contract on 7 December 1935 in Rome, both the Superior General and the Bishop agreed that at least four priests from the prospective apostolic school in New Manila, insofar as it would be possible, would be assigned to the Diocese of Tuguegarao every year.

Arrival of the SVD Missionaries in Cagayan⁸⁹

The first SVD missionaries to work in Cagayan were Fr. Michael Anspach and Fr. Wilhelm Schlombs who departed from Manila on 17 November 1933 after their retreat in Baguio City. On 19 November, they arrived at the Bishop's House in Tuguegarao where they met Bishop Jurgens who took obvious delight in their arrival: "I greatly rejoiced at the arrival of the two Fathers. Blessed be God and may God bless your Society. The two Fathers made the best impression and

⁸⁸The contract stipulated, "Ex communi deliberatione, habita die 7. Dec. 1935 in Urbe, cum Sua Excellentia, Rev.mo Domino C. Jurgens, Episcopo Tuguegaraoano in Contractu praejacenta sub n. 2 b prior textus restitutus est, addendo tamen post verbum 'sacerdotes': 'et eos quidem inquantam fieri potest', ita ut textus huius numeri 2 b sit: Si Deo adiuvante futurum sit, ut in schola apostolica S.V.D. Novae Manilae erecta numerus sufficiens juvenum indigenarum ad sacerdotium eleventur, Episcopus Tuguegar. poterit, si ita voluerit, quovis anno saltem quattuor vel plures etiam sacerdotes *et eos quidem inquantum fieri potest* [italics mine] indigenas S.V.D. obtinere." See "Ad Contractum Episcopi Dioecesis Tuguegaraoanae et Societatis Verbi Divini," Rome, AGSVD, AS, R:738:1912-1959. The phrase in italics was inserted in the contract. Bishop Jurgens returned the modified contract with his signature. See Jurgens to Grendel, 11 December 1935, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959. Fr. Grendel acknowledged the changes made to the contract. See also Grendel to Buttenbruch, 14 February 1936, Manila, PAPHC, HA, vol. Letters of Superior General II.

⁸⁹Müller, "The Entry of the Society of the Divine Word into Cagayan 1933," 57-72. See also Antonio Alagao, ed., "The Divine Word Missionaries in Cagayan," *The Ilocos Review* 33 (2010): 1-101.

we have talked much about Claveria and the work to be done. They left this morning for Aparri. I trust that everything will turn out alright and anticipate no troubles.”⁹⁰ After their sojourn in Tuguegarao, they left for Claveria. Fr. Manuel Apostol, a Filipino diocesan priest, met them in Aparri and accompanied them to Claveria on 21 November 1933. He soon left Claveria paving the way for the two SVD missionaries to start their mission. Fr. Bittenbruch had this to say:

It gives me great pleasure to inform Your Excellency about the good news from the Fathers in Claveria. I received the second letter from Father M. Anspach yesterday. Both letters state that there was nothing of a protest or unwillingness [on] the part of the people to accept the missionaries. And Father Anspach lauded very much the attitude of the Parish Priest who gave the S.V.D. Fathers a fine introduction everywhere. The Fathers are not disappointed with the conditions they found. There is much mission work for immortal souls to be done, but they found a good cooperative spirit among the Christians in Claveria as well as in Sanchez Mira. With this good will of the people, there is hope of great success in the work for souls.

Missionaries are accustomed to poverty and when the churches and conventos look like ruins, this aspect will not discourage the zealous priests, especially if he finds good will and cooperative spirit of the people. And once they meet the first needs and accommodate themselves to the place, then the upbuilding of the parishes will begin and with the help of the Bishop, of the Missionaries and of the people there, it will be easy to restore in Christ the Church of the Cagayan Valley.⁹¹

During the Holy Week of 1934, Fr. Bittenbruch was

⁹⁰Jurgens to Bittenbruch, 20 November 1933, Manila, PAPHC, HA, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

⁹¹Bittenbruch to Jurgens, 10 December 1933, Manila, PAPHC, HA, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

in Claveria and Sanchez Mira: “It was a great pleasure for me to do missionary work again. It is a wonderful people, especially in Claveria. We hear more than three hundred confessions and nearly all of them were really ‘eastern-confessions’. Sanchez Mira will come back to the Catholic Church, as soon as we have a church and a resident Catholic priest. They all are willing to help and once we shall have more men in that district, the Catholic religion will bring the people back to Christ again. It is a wonderful mission for our Fathers.”⁹² Besides their mission in Claveria, the missionaries also took charge of the town of Sanchez Mira. When the SVDs started their mission in this town, there were only thirty Catholic families since many of them were Aglipayans. For a long time, there was no resident priest which explained the reason why there was only a provisional chapel without a rectory. Soon the missionaries began the construction of a church in Sanchez Mira, and it was consecrated on 16 August 1935. The parish rectory, however, was not yet finished.⁹³ The work of the missionaries not only included towns but also far-flung villages which they also had to visit. Many of these communities could only be reached on foot. Fr. Karl Pütz, who was assigned to Cagayan wrote, “Wearing black cassocks, they visited 30 villages that were part of Claveria. They trekked for kilometers under a hot tropical sun, over a narrow turf and between ricefields to celebrate the Holy Mass for

⁹²Buttenbruch to Jurgens, 12 May 1934, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

⁹³Anspach to Buttenbruch, 16 August 1935, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959. Anspach reported, „Der convento hier [ist] immer noch nicht fertig, es geht uns halt wie allen armen Leuten, müssen uns nach der Decke strecken, doch hoffe ich, die wichtigsten Arbeiten noch vor dem Regen fertig zu bekommen.“ Anspach to Buttenbruch, 16 August 1935.

their faithful.”⁹⁴

Fr. Philipp van Engelen described the trip to Cagayan from Manila during that time:

My trip to Claveria even brought a certain thrill. The first leg of the journey was by train and the rest of the 300 kilometers was by means of a truck which was one half filled with baggage and the other half with people. Three days were needed for the whole trip. In two places, we had to wait for a connection. We had to traverse a hilly terrain, close to the sea, through rivers and derelict bridges. The roads were particularly bad in the north, so you were extremely shaken.⁹⁵

The First Alumni of Christ the King Mission Seminary

The first students of the newly established seminary were members of the Mission Club of the diocesan seminary in Vigan. They arrived on 24 May 1934 at Christ the King in New Manila. Those in first year

⁹⁴Karl Pütz, „50 Jahre Steyler Missionare in Cagayan, Philippinen,“ Sankt Augustin, Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institut, Josef Schmitz Papers, 4. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁹⁵The quotation, which is a translation of the Dutch text, was taken from the travel diary of Fr. Philipp van Engelen on his voyage to Manila from 13 August to 29 September 1935. See the travel diary of Philipp van Engelen, Teteringen, Provincialate Archives of the Netherlands-Belgium Province, p. 27. As Fr. van Engelen recounted, “Als de hellingen te steil waren, moesten we loopen, we hebben een kwartier tussen rollende keien gezeten, [w]aar we eerst na veel hotsen en slingeren weer uit vrij kwamen ect ect. Ik kan ieder, die last heeft van zijn zenuwen zoo'n tochtje aanbevelen: als hij erdoor komt, heeft hij geen zenuwen meer!” See Travel Diary of Fr. Philipp van Engelen, p.27. Fr. Philipp van Engelen was a Dutch SVD missionary. He boarded the steamer *Trier* on 13 August 1935 from Rotterdam and arrived in Manila on 29 September 1935. See *Verzeichnis der Reisenden*, Teteringen, Provincialate Archives of the Netherlands-Belgium Province (PANEB).

college were Ceferino Leonen, Constante Floresca, Anselmo Bustos, and Santiago Leones from the Diocese of Nueva Segovia who took up Latin in the seminary in Vigan; Jesus Gaffud, Eduardo Molano, and Jose Lazo from the Diocese of Tuguegarao who also learned Latin in Vigan; and Frederico Limon from the Diocese of Lingayen who studied Latin in Binmaley Seminary.⁹⁶ Those in the first year high school were Quintin Terrenal, Manuel Villaruz and Juan Cachero from the Diocese of Nueva Segovia, Domingo Galicia from the Diocese of Lingayen, Salvador Lazo and Pio Morales from the Diocese of Tuguegarao.⁹⁷ The School Year began on 8 June 1934 on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The curriculum was patterned after the curriculum of St. Mary's Seminary in Techny, Illinois. The students had to finish four years High School, attend two years in college and then the novitiate. They

⁹⁶*Catalogus Sodalium Societatis Verbi Divini* (Mödling: Domus Missionum ad S. Gabrielem Archangelum, 1936), 153-154. Cf. *Liber Votorum et Liber Ordinationum*, Manila, PAPHC, HA. See also Constante Floresca, "Christ the King Mission Seminary: 1934-1937," Manuscript, MMPs. These students came from the following provinces: Constancio Floresca from Naguilian, La Union; Jesus Gaffud from Echague, Isabela; Jose Lazo from Faire, Cagayan; Ceferino Leonen from Bangar, Ilocos Norte; Santiago Leones from Bacnotan, La Union; Frederico Limon from Mangaldan, Pangasinan; Anselmo Bustos from Macabebe, Pampanga. Santiago Leones is not written on the record book of the list of CKS List of Students/Seminarians. Cf. CKS List of Students/Seminarians, Manila, PAPHC, HA, Box 62-B.

⁹⁷*Catalogus Sodalium Societatis Verbi Divini* (Mödling: Domus Missionum ad S. Gabrielem Archangelum, 1940), 176. These students came from the following provinces: Quintin Terrenal from Tayum, Abra; Manuel Villaruz from Pilar, Abra; Juan Cachero from Naguilian, La Union; Domingo Galicia from San Carlos, Pangasinan; Salvador Lazo from Faire, Cagayan; Pio Morales from Abulug, Cagayan. Bruno Lopez and Filemon Molina are on the CKS List of Students/Seminarians. Cf. CKS List of Students/Seminarians, Manila, PAPHC, HA, Box 62-B.

had to complete three years of Philosophy and one year practicum before they were sent to North America for their theological studies.⁹⁸

Fr. Constante Floresca, one of the first students who arrived at Christ the King, described the new SVD foundation in New Manila in this extensive quote:

At the time when we entered Christ the King Seminary, the main building was standing, with castle-like facade with six towers. But within the building itself there were no partitions from end to end – only three walls, because the rear part of the building consisted of open veranda-like corridors. We occupied the western part of the third floor for our dormitory and for classes.

Besides the main building, there were the steel house, and the carpentry shop about fifty meters behind the main building. In the first months we used as chapel a part of the carpentry shop. Later, the western part of the first floor of the main building was set up as chapel.

At that time, there were no buildings near Christ the King. Our nearest neighbors were the St. Paul Sisters in Gilmore, and Camp Murphy. To go to Manila, we had to hike to N. Domingo to take a bus that passes through San Juan del Monte and Sta. Mesa.

Behind the seminary were bushes until San Francisco del Monte. At that time the creek which serves as the boundary of Christ the King property was still clear and sparkling, and we used to take a swim there in the afternoons. For our walks we used to go to the bushes and pick guava fruits. Sometimes we crossed the bushes to visit the Franciscans who had also started their seminary.⁹⁹

⁹⁸Buttenbruch to Hagspiel, 15 May 1934, Manila, PAPHC, *HA*, vol. Correspondence with Hagspiel.

⁹⁹Floresca, “Christ the King Mission Seminary: 1934-1937.”

The rector and prefect of the seminary was Fr. Heinrich Scheffers who taught Latin. The teacher for both German and Algebra to the first year class was Fr. Josef Bette. Fr. Ludwig Meissner taught first year Latin while Fr. Antonio Albrecht taught Spanish. English was taught by Fr. Lawrence Bunzel. Fr. Buttenbruch gave lessons in Sacred Scriptures. Br. Richard was in charge of the carpentry shop while Br. Jerome was responsible for marketing.

Fr. Buttenbruch also consulted Bishop Jurgens concerning the novice master: "Next year I intend to open the noviciate [sic] and How do you like to appoint Father Hettegger as the novice master. He knows the boys and Filipino character and his educational work in Vigan Seminary prepared him for this most important task."¹⁰⁰

On 21 April 1935, the Generalate in Rome decreed the erection of the Mission House of Christ the King in New Manila.¹⁰¹ The obstacles toward the completion of the Mission House were surmounted through the courage of Fr. Buttenbruch and the generosity of Bishop Jurgens. Fr. Karl Pütz acknowledged the assistance of the bishop: "His inheritance and the help of his wealthy brothers made it possible for the construction of the Steyler Mission Seminary."¹⁰² Fr. Buttenbruch was very grateful to Bishop Jurgens for his financial assistance

¹⁰⁰Buttenbruch to Jurgens, 12 May 1934, vol. Correspondence with Lipa/Tuguegarao.

¹⁰¹The Decretum Erectionis stated, "In honorem Sanctissimae Trinitatis, ad bonum Sanctae Ecclesiae Catholicae et nostrae Societatis et praecipue ad promovendum opus eiusdem missionarium; invocatis caelestibus Societatis nostrae Patronis in urbe NEW MANILA in insulis Philippinis sita domum Societatis ad Christum Regem nominandam hisce canonice erigo erectamque declaro." See "Decretum Erectionis," *NSVD* 2 (1936): 238.

¹⁰²Pütz, „50 Jahre Steyler Missionare in Cagayan, Philippinen," 1. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

and for his encouragement and support for the realization of the establishment of the seminary. He expressed his gratitude in this letter:

I thank you again for your congratulations to the silver Jubilee you extended to me so heartily. It will be for me a happy remembrance this day and I thank God, that he gave me this great favor to see realized the Mission Seminary, an enterprise which caused me so much worry and it was for the great help and encouragement of Your Excellency that inspired me to carry this project thru. Therefore I thank you again and ask your prayers for the mentioned institution. With this letter I send an enlargement of the Mission Seminary together with a photo of the novices for the Holy Father. Really it makes me proud to think, that the Holy Father will see this seminary and will bless us again.¹⁰³

The regional house of the Society was transferred to New Manila. On 21 April 1936, the first regional council meeting was held at the new regional house at Christ the King Mission Seminary in New Manila.

Conclusion

The excellent relations between the CICM Bishop of the Diocese of Tuguegarao and the missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word resulted in the missionary

¹⁰³Buttenbruch to Jurgens, 25 October 1935, Manila, PAPHC, HA, Box 19, Cagayan Mission/Bishop Jurgens: 1936-1941. Fr. Grendel also expressed his gratitude to Bishop Jurgens: „Wie ich zu Gott hoffe, ist dadurch jetzt sowohl der Diözese von Ew. Excellenz wie auch den Bedürfnissen unserer Region auf den Philippinen Rechnung getragen. Nochmals kann ich Ew. Excellenz nur recht von Herzen danken, daß Sie in so väterlicher und wirksamer Weise besonders die Sache unseres Seminars in New Manila unterstützt und gefördert haben.“ See Grendel to Jurgens, 10 December 1935, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738:1912-1959

engagement of the SVDs in Cagayan and the establishment of the Christ the King Mission Seminary in New Manila. Bishop Jurgens, who at that time experienced problems concerning the members of his clergy and the lack of personnel to take charge of the far-flung parishes of the Diocese which were situated in northern Cagayan, sought the assistance of the Society of the Divine Word for its members to work in his Diocese. In his opinion the religious priests could bring back to the fold those who left the Church as well as to edify the members of the local clergy. For this undertaking to materialize, the Bishop offered financial support for the construction of the building of Christ the King Mission Seminary. During that time, the SVDs experienced financial difficulties in view of the restrictions that impeded the transfer of funds from Germany to the Philippines. Hailing from a well-to-do family in the Netherlands, the Bishop came to the rescue by providing financial guarantees in the form of personal loans with low interest rates. The assistance of the Bishop in the emergence of an SVD mission seminary originated from an urgent need of his Diocese. The Bishop agreed to help on the condition that some SVD missionaries who would finish their studies at the mission seminary would be assigned to Cagayan. Fr. Bittenbruch, who regularly corresponded with the Bishop, took charge of the project and saw to it that the loans were fully paid. Since the funds were, in the first place, not taken from the coffers of the Diocese but from the personal funds of the Bishop, the Diocese of Tuguegarao cannot claim ownership of the Seminary.

Noise of Violent Human Speech and the Restraint of Contemplative Silence

Alvenio G. Mozol, Jr.♦

Abstract: This essay assumes that violent human speech is a form of noise. It argues that linguistic integrity is primarily a function of a “silent mind” soaked in silence—a silence which is not a mere absence of words, a type of passive protest, or a state of unspeakable suffering, but the spacious, fertile, and transfiguring ground of human speech because it is the boundless yet contingent “temple of divine presence”. This study is developed through the Judeo-Christian *praxis* and *theoria* of contemplative silence, using biblical, early Christian, and contemporary sources: The First Temple tradition, those of the desert fathers/abbas and mothers/ammās, and from Anglican solitary Maggie Ross with her “work of silence.” Thus, contemplative silence is argued 1) in its more restraining reconstructive potential for some imagined social order and 2) beyond restraint, in the habit of contemplative silence that leads toward a more peaceful, compassionate society.

Keywords: Language, noise, violence, contemplative silence, Temple theology, desert spirituality, Maggie Ross

♦ Alvenio G. Mozol, Jr., is a lecturer in the Theology and Religious Education Department, De La Salle University. He obtained his Master of Health Social Science from the DLSU as a Ford Foundation scholar. He was trained in healthcare ethics at Albert Gnaegi Center for Healthcare Ethics, Saint Louis University, Missouri, as well as in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas where he worked as a lay Chaplain Fellow for two years for patients with brain and lung cancers and was awarded the Rev. Edward Mahnke Award for excellence in CPE. His two recent essays were commissioned for the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF): “Immanuel Kant Para sa Ating Kapanahunan,” and “Etika ng Globalisasyon at Ekolohiya: Tugon mula sa Relihiyon, Hamon para sa mga Millennials/Fillennials.” He is the author of the book *Engaging Silence, Climbing Mt. Tabor: Faith-Life Meditations* (Quezon City: Great Books Trading, 2015). Mozol also facilitates retreats and recollections for DLSU formation programmes and other communities.

Introduction

Asian cultures in general,¹ and Filipinos' in particular, exhibit certain "oral modes of thought and expression."² Foronda wrote in his seminal article on oral history that the "Filipino is by and large a talking, rather than, a writing individual, and rare is the Filipino statesman, artist, educator, diplomat, military man, or government official, who would spend time writing memoirs."³ Spoken, heard words do have magnetic suasion for Filipinos. Filipinos use video chat.⁴ Gossiping remains a cultural artefact.⁵ Graduation

¹Cf. Patricia Lim Pui Huen, James H. Morrison & Kwa Chong Guan, eds., *Oral History in Southeast Asia: Theory and Method* (Singapore: National Archives of Singapore, 1998).

²Recent work on Philippine orality is Merlie M. Alunan, ed., *Susumaton: Oral Narratives of Leyte* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2016). Gerard Rixhon, ed., *Voices from Sulu: A Collection of Tausug oral Traditions* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2010).

For a sustained and detailed treatment on orality and textuality, see the well-known work of Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002).

³Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr., "Oral History in the Philippines: Prospects and Trends," p.11 at <https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=5054>. See also *Kasaysayan: Studies on Local and Oral History* (Manila, Philippines: De La Salle University Press, 1991).

⁴Viber is said to be the most popular social media these days in terms of public chats and getting daily news because of instant and constant interaction with messaging apps unlike Twitter or Facebook. <http://preen.inquirer.net/35366/public-chats-are-gods-gift-to-news-readers#ixzz4PN8IjNPx> by Jacqueline Arias.

⁵Academicians John Sabini and Maury Silver at one point appeared before the academic court and lawyered for gossip, turning gossip into a defendant against its accusers. While they penned that "gossip is a curious pleasure and a sin," and that it has its own vices, their whole chapter "A Plea for Gossip" argues on the positive moral character of gossiping. These values include self-clarification of moral principles and stand, a sense of intimacy by excluding others, finding "support for people's outrage," and becoming "heroes of a

ceremonies and formal gatherings are capped with speakers, and political rallies with angry ideologues. Entertaining conversationalists, storytellers, dramatic homilists, confident presentors in public fora of marketable products or ideas, dynamic retreat facilitators, lawyers, bar comedians, hilarious teachers, crooners, emphatic movie villains – they usually are the crowd-drawers, with the most avid fans and Twitter followers.

But because the oral modes remain the currency of public and private communication, oral power could also be taken for granted, and thus unwittingly morphs into linguistic noise and violence;⁶ a noisy orality that goes beyond the mechanical definition of noise as “*unwanted sound*” into something political as “a signifier of an ideological power, an insensitivity to the natural rhythms of human existence.”⁷ An orality has transmogrified into its violent expression if by violence we mean “every action or lack of action of persons or cultures (including customs, institutions, structures) that are *insensitive* to and *oppressive* of human persons who have been created according to the divine image

moral drama with a minimum of inconvenience,” *Moralities of Everyday Life* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1982), 89-106. In monastic tradition, gossiping is simply sinful that monks must refrain from committing. The tradition adhered to the psychology of “inner demons” and monks believed that the demonic was an “extension of the self,” the sum of “all that was anomalous and incomplete in man.” Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1993), 193.

⁶From a social science perspective, philosopher William C. Gay has written extensively on linguistic violence and linguistic nonviolence. Cf. “The Role of Language in Justifying and Eliminating Cultural Violence,” DOI 10.1163/9789004361911_004. Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2018, 32-63.

⁷Stuart Sim, *Manifesto for Silence: Confronting the Politics and Culture of Noise* (George Square, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 93.

and likeness.”⁸ If it is *oppressive* and *insensitive*, therefore it is *unwanted* by our senses. Holocaust survivor Primo Levi issued a hunch on this type of linguistic violence when he argued that “whoever does violence to human beings...is bound also to do violence to language.”⁹ That systemic violence in ‘human speech’ can go hand in hand with the violent human deaths and criminalities in the country is no longer a matter of a wild conjecture. A glaring example was the day President Duterte issued a statement against the victims of the Holocaust, telling his audience that if Germany had Hitler who exterminated millions of Jews and people are pondering of his Hitlerian propensity, then, he would be “happy to slaughter” three million drug addicts in the country. There was moral gravity to the speech as it was promotional of violence, condemnatory of lost innocent lives, and a trivialization of more ordinary lives ever imperiled by the seemingly perpetual social forces of deprivation and systemic inequality. On the Solemnity of All Saints this year, the President issued this controversial statement: “These f*cking Catholics, why do they observe All Souls’ Day and All Saints’ Day? We don’t even know who those

⁸Gerald Arbuckle, *Violence, Society, and the Church: A Cultural Approach* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2009), xii, italics supplied.

⁹Victor Brombert, *Musings on Mortality: From Tolstoy to Primo Levi* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 151. Primo Levi was an Italian chemist and writer who was brought to Auschwitz as a Jewish prisoner. He survived the Holocaust by working as a chemist for the Third Reich in producing synthetic rubber for its warfare. Thirty years after his exit from Auschwitz, he allegedly committed suicide by jumping from the fourth floor of a building. Writers, including Elie Weisel thought it was most likely “survival shame” that drove him to self-destruction. Princeton professor Brombert thought Levi’s most personal and original work is The Periodic Table.

saints are. Who are those stupid saints? They're just drunkards,"¹⁰

There have been some clamor both from the domestic front to the wider, global political communities for a more 'restrained and refined speech' on the part of the President. The President in turn threw a volley of charges, calling his critics hypocritical and meddlesome but out of which oppositional and hegemonic partisan and global forces are also tasked either to become defensive or hold in honesty their own accountabilities for past acts of violence they inflicted on the public. The political mudslinging and paranoia have become staple news and noise, a case of a communication impasse, a social phenomenon that social theorist Niklas Luhmann mused about, on how communication functions arbitrarily in society:

A communication does not communicate (*mitteilen*) the world, it divides (*einteilen*) it.

Like any operation of living or thinking, communication produces a caesura. It says what it says; it does not say what it does not say. It differentiates. If further communications connect (*anschließen*), systemic boundaries form which stabilize the cut.¹¹

Communication cuts like a knife. "Some things are destroyed in the speaking, already lost in any translation."¹² 'Human speech' has the power to create a bloody event. For Luhmann, every mode of speaking in society is a mode of marginalization and exclusion. Yet,

¹⁰Ian Nicolas Cigaral, 'Santo Rodrigo': Duterte pokes fun at Catholic 'All Saints Day'. See, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/02/1865300/santo-rodrigo-duterte-pokes-fun-catholic-all-saints-day#65DFDVE6B6MdgO12.99>

¹¹Niklas Luhmann. "Reden und Schweigen." Trans. Kerstin Benhke, "Speaking and Silence," from Peter Fuch and Niklas Luhmann, *Reden und Schweigen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 25.

¹²Karmen MacKendrick, *Immemorial Silence* (New York, NY: State University Press of New York, 2001), 3.

society always communicates and hence, the perpetual including and excluding which Luhmann considers as a ‘communicative paradox’. How then is this paradox resolved? A schema he proposes is by way of this question: “Who can observe with the help of the distinction between *speaking* and *silence*, that is, who can communicate about this distinction?”¹³ This essay will deal with this question as it focuses on contemplative silence.

By way of analogy, contemplative silence attempts to name the dis-ease and discontent over violent human speech, while posting silence as one option of addressing social wounds tangible in society’s communication impasses, or systemic contradictions. Contemplative silence heals.¹⁴ But the restlessness must be named first, embraced, or provoked through some honest discourses. The *praxis* and *theoria* of the 3 strands of contemplative silence in this essay – biblical, early Christianity, and Maggie Ross – would be countercultural, and resonant with Llosa’s idea of a “good book,” are posted as critique to the noise of violent human speech in our cultural timeline.¹⁵ Jerome Berryman goes as far as arguing that

¹³Luhmann, p.25. Luhmann is a positivist sociologist who does not subscribe even to the possibility of a ‘transcendent silence’ at least in this expository article on silence.

¹⁴See, Maggie Ross lecture at Durham University on “Healing Silence,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CEsE1nGas0>.

¹⁵An epistemological criterion was laid out at one point by Peruvian novelist and 2010 Nobel Laureate in Literature Mario Vargas Llosa regarding the question on what makes a good book when he spoke of it terms of its capacity to “develop some kind of malaise or dissatisfaction of the world.”¹⁵ A “good book” for Llosa stirs an uneasiness over the currencies of the time, especially those that curtail basic individual freedom by way of violent regimes. Juanio Arcellana, “Vargas Llosa on reading, fast becoming a lost art,” November 14, 2016, *The Philippine Star* at <https://beta.philstar.com/lifestyle/arts-and-culture/2016/11/14/1642188/vargas-llosa-reading-fast-becoming-lost-art#34OW7TE8gMjQiURs.99>.

the “loss of silence in our culture will result in the loss of religious meaning and the impairment of creativity.”¹⁶ Voices of contemplative silence beckon for the time to again befriend, or re-friend silence, to navigate its waters of critique of the disorders of ‘human speech’ and attune to the euphony of its fiery nonviolence.

Contemplative silence as reconstructive response to Luhmann

The Judeo-Christian Tradition has strands of answer to Luhmann’s dilemma running through its beautiful but convoluted traditions of *contemplative silence* which offer acute ways of distinguishing between ‘*speaking* and *silence*’. More than its power to distinguish, this typology of silence is even considered subversive to human speech, the one that is marked by noise, or any noise that is a by-product of human toil. Contemplative silence has the potential as a theological reference for what Anglican scholar Rowan Williams hinted as “abundant or ‘excessive’ reality engulfing our mental activities so that our language does strange things under its pressure.”¹⁷ Beyond Luhmann’s sociological perspective, contemplative silence offers ways of deepening or correcting ‘human speech’ enveloped by the superficiality of noise or violence. It is a more

Mario Vargas Llosa was conferred the Doctorate in Literature *honoris causa* by the De La Salle University on November 8, 2016. The Nobel Prize Committee honored him “for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual’s resistance, revolt, and defeat,” http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2010/

¹⁶Jerome W. Berryman, “Silence is stranger than it used to be: teaching silence and the future of humankind,” *Religious Education* 94/3 (Summer 1999): 257.

¹⁷Rowan Williams, *The Edge of Words: God and the habits of language* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 7.

holographic but paradoxical way of responding to communication impasses becoming more common in a society marked by violent abuses of the mind and body by way of systemic corruption, or drug addiction and the violence engendered by its deterrence.

The history of contemplative silence is replete with nuances, images, interpretations, and even controversies. It is a myriad of images and scholars of spirituality (of which silence is a subset) do acknowledge silence's long, complex, dappled, or trampled history. In his masterful study, Diarmaid MacCulloch has traced the Christian history of silence from its roots in the Tanakh to the New Testament and its innovations in the succeeding periods of monasticism, Reformations up to our contemporary time.¹⁸ Viewed largely from the history of the Western church, MacCulloch though admits that in spite of "rich materials" from the West and Latin Rite, the Western experience remains a "distorted sample of Christian experience" given that Western Christianity, and its habitus of silences, was constrained for centuries in the contested ground of imperial power. Even the Tanakh tradition, according to MacCulloch, can easily complicate our contemporary understanding of silence when its observance from a Jewish faith had less to do with stillness (though a part of the tradition) and more to do with disasters, defeat, deprivation, or one's silent death in Sheol, and how the silence of God provoked "protests, expostulation and anguished supplication" expressed in the recitation of the Psalms at the Temple.

Theorized silence has come a long way, from the time of the classical Greek period and how it has been woven and embodied through the poly-images and valences of past and present eras. Indeed, current literature on

¹⁸Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Silence: A Christian History* (Penguin Books: New York, 2013).

contemplative silence,¹⁹ written through different hermeneutical lenses, has mushroomed and it may be an indication of a response to the need to redress the dehumanizing noise of linguistic violence of our time. Alternatively, some theological hermeneutics and re-appropriation of Biblical/Temple-inspired silence, desert-based silence, and the ‘work of silence’ of Maggie Ross may ground the above exposition on linguistic noise, violence and impasses.

First Temple tradition²⁰ and contemplative silence

The noun “contemplative” has always been associated with something spiritual or religious, both within and outside of Christianity, although its transitive verb “contemplate” has acquired a number of neutral meanings ranging from pensive looking to intending or anticipating, to seriously considering. The American Heritage Dictionary dissects the word between the

¹⁹Cf. Nancy Billias & Sivaram Vemuri, *The Ethics of Silence: An Interdisciplinary Case Analysis Approach* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Malgorzata Grzegorzewska, Jean Ward & Mark Burrows, eds., *Breaking the Silence: Poetry and the Kenotic Word* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2015); Diego Irarrázaval, et. al., eds., *Silence. Concilium* 2015/5. London: SCM Press, 2015); George Prochnik, *In Pursuit of Silence: Listening for Meaning in a World of Noise* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2010); Karmen MacKendrick *Immemorial Silence* (New York, NY: State University Press of New York, 2001).

²⁰Old Testament independent scholar Margaret Barker has made trailblazing studies on Temple theology, incisively showing the profound distinctions between the First Temple tradition and the Second Temple tradition, favoring the former as more “mystical” in its liturgical praxis, and the latter as more legalistic after Josiah introduced the reform of the Temple by divesting its many symbols including the anointing with oil among others. Cf. Margaret Barker, *Temple Mysticism: An Introduction* (London, UK: SPCK, 2011).

prefix *com* for intensive and *templum* as a space for observing auguries or divination, rendering a more polytheism-inspired understanding. The Ancient Near East cultures were centered around cultic practices, including divination, in temples.²¹

From a Jewish perspective, and as a practical derivative from their neighboring ancient cultures, “contemplation” has evolved into a monotheistic act of adoration that took place in the Jewish Temple, the very center of Jewish life. The Temple worship in Jerusalem was “generally extremely noisy”²² because prayers primarily had to be vocal based on the assumption that “Yahweh demanded praise that could be heard.” Also, animal butchery for sacrificial offering during major feasts became part of this cultic noise.²³ Amidst the liturgical noise though was infused an intentional silence.²⁴ This grand silence begins when the assigned priest enters the Holy Place to burn the incense. By then, every activity in the Temple ceases, and those in the inner court withdraw from the area, while those outside the Temple fall down with hands outstretched. Complete silence fills the Temple area. In a positive sense, this silence gestures their complete submission to their Royal God, and in a negative sense, an adamant refusal to submit to the royal kings and gods and goddesses of their neighboring cultures.²⁵ Because the

²¹Micha Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

²²MacCulloch, 14.

²³Peter J. Leithart has a more nuanced argument that animal slaughter in the “Mosaic tent” tradition (different from the First Temple tradition) was done in silence. Cf. *From Silence to Song: The Davidic Liturgical Revolution* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003), 54.

²⁴Anne Punton, *The World of Jesus: Beliefs and Customs from the Time of Jesus* (Oxford, OX: Lion Hudson, 2009), 175-176.

²⁵This is not to deny the fact also that King Solomon built the

Temple is also an imagined worship in Heaven, the visionary author of the book of Revelation picked up this core Temple motif of heavenly worship and silence in chapter 8, verse 1: “When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”

A couple of psalmodies recited in the Temple that gave prominence to silence are Psalms 19: 1-4:²⁶

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
day unto day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

and Psalm 37: 7: “Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him...”

Walter Brueggemann and William Bellinger, two prominent scholars on the Hebrew Psalter, consider the whole Psalm 19 as a poetic hymn of praise to the creator. The imagery of the firmament or heaven proclaiming divine glory in silence or “unheard sound” symbolizes the infinite openness of this glory to everyone, and by extension, to those who can attend in silence to this silent praise. Psalm 37 verse 7 on the other hand is found in the midst of the psalmody’s dialectics: between the prosperity and success of the wicked and evil schemes in the world and the challenge of trusting the providence of God for those who remain

First Temple as a political and economic strategy of control of the religious sphere, and how the structure was built on the sweat and blood of the laborers of the monarchy and a burdensome taxation system to support the project, as recounted in 1 Kings chaps. 1-9.

²⁶Bible verses are from the Revised Standard Version.

faithful in spite of their stumbles.²⁷ To “be still” or silent in the whole context of the psalmody is to listen or wait in patience on God’s reliable providence.²⁸

A contemporary of prophet Ezekiel during the pre-Babylonian conquest and destruction of the First Temple, prophet Habakkuk was also known for his advocacy of Temple-based silence as an affirmation of and humility before divine power and silence as a weapon against the imperial violence of the Chaldeans: “But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.”²⁹ From the Hebrew Scriptures, a common Jewish source of inspiration on the interplay of contemplative silence and speech is through the Hebrew word *chashmal* for gleam of amber, an image used by Prophet Ezekiel alone for one of his visions. This compound word could be dissected into *chash* for silence, and *millel* for speaking. *Chasmal* is translated into Greek as *electrum* and the Talmud posits that to be charged by the *electrum*, the Holy Light and Fire, is to cut one’s speaking (*mal*) first and be silent (*chash*) in adoration.³⁰

²⁷Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, *Psalms* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 100-103 & 208-214 respectively.

²⁸For an in-depth exposition of the interchangeable sense or meaning of “stillness” and “silence,” especially in the account of Elijah’s “still, small voice” in 1 Kings 19: 12, cf. Eric D. Reymond’s syntactical study, “The Hebrew Word דממה and the Root *d-m-m* I (“To Be Silent”),” *Biblica* 90/3 (2009): 374-388. The study attempts to settle the debate whether the Hebrew word for “still” in Elijah’s account means “whisper” or “silence” and Reymond argues for the latter.

²⁹Hab. 2:20.

³⁰Chaim Bentorah, “Word Study - The electricity of God,” <http://www.chaimbentorah.com/2015/06/word-study-the-electricity-of-god/> accessed 06 Oct. 2018.

Desert fathers and mothers and contemplative silence

The Temple sense of contemplative silence has run long and deep in the Judeo-Christian traditions – from the Jewish prophetic, apocalyptic, Kabbalistic, Hasidic, Rabbinic mystical traditions to Jesus’ habit of solitary prayer in the desert; from the habitus of silence of the desert fathers and mothers to the monastic spirituality of the West and the emerging neo-monasticism of the present.

The silent lives of the early Christians in the desert began around 250 A.D. and during the height of persecution by the Roman imperial power. By 311 A.D., Christians were allowed to practice their faith through the Edict of Toleration. A year after, Constantine espoused the Christian religion and the toleration of Christians and their practices were further cemented. Eventually, Constantine legalized Christianity as the official State religion, lavishing it with wealth and respectability to the extent that “imperial Christianity came to follow the political division of the empire.”³¹ It was in this growing worldliness of Christianity, amidst the noise of worldly ecclesiastical and political power, of religious squabbles and violence especially toward the non-Christians and “heretics” that some started to hunger for a Gospel-based peace. Basic to this longing was to renounce the superficialities that Christianity had bowed into, and pursue the depth and simplicity of Christian discipleship after the humble, non-imperial Christ. They were in search of a “new temple” that would insulate them from the imperial noise, and bow in silent adoration to the “true King.” This “new temple” was the silent desert. It was an ordinary longing from

³¹Diarmuid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 2009), 427.

ordinary Christians whose residence in the desert and its demanding silence was initially piqued by a certain angst: that their fledgling, growing faith and life of prayer was now compromised and could no longer be nourished by the “noise, triviality, and rootlessness around them.”³²

After more than one thousand and five hundred years, conversations and discourses about the desert *abbas* and *ammas* have not ceased, and one obvious reason is that the multivalent virtues they passed on through their Sayings and aphorisms still resonate with every generation’s profound thirst for *simplicity, obscurity, self-restraint, patience, humility, detachment, compassion, integrity, vulnerability, or sense of mortality*. Their imperfect and paradoxical lives, can open up to a source of wisdom and moral compass.

So many of their insightful discoveries offer a plethora of practical wisdom, even to this day. Like challenging Zen koans, they coined wisdom sayings to clarify the difference between mechanical devotion and spiritual maturity.³³

What was the wellspring of their teaching authority and voice? Monasticism scholar Douglas Burton-Christie believed that they “spoke words of authority, though it was often in their silence that they were most eloquent.” In Christie’s very insightful study, the disposition of the desert fathers and mothers toward language is one of careful attention:

...examining the way words work, how and when one should speak, and above all how to develop integrity of life and words. Their concern with words also helps to

³²Alan J. Placa & Brendan P. Riordan, *Desert Silence: A Way of Prayer for an Unquiet Age* (New York: Living Flame Press, 1977), 20.

³³Justin Langille, “There is Nothing Between God and You: Awakening to the Wisdom of Contemplative Silence,” *Sewanee Theological Review* 50/3 (Pentecost 2007): 375.

explain why such importance was attached to silence in the desert. Silence not only prevented one from using language in a harmful way but also provided the fertile ground out of which words of power could grow and through which these words could bear fruit in lives of holiness.³⁴

Silence was central to their contemplative life: the silence of adoration; silence before the Word in Scriptures; silence before a wise elder; silence as the ground of their desire for purity of heart, and from silence as their speaking platform ensued their ‘human speech’ of kindness, gentleness, humor, or searing self-honesty. Silence as the very measure of discerning the “wheat from the chaff” as gleaned from this aphorism:

...A man may seem to be silent, but if his heart is condemning others he is babbling ceaselessly. But there may be another who talks from morning till night and yet he is truly silent; that is, he says nothing that is not profitable.³⁵

It was a world of orality they inhabited, yet they allowed silence as “the final word.”³⁶

Maggie Ross and her ‘work of silence’

Maggie Ross is a publicly professed Anglican Solitary under the protection of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Other than inhabiting silence, she has written extensively on the subject and her writings deserve both careful study and practical application. Silence for her is

³⁴Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford, OX: Oxford University Press, 1993), 146.

³⁵Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Cistercian Publications: Oxford, 1975), 171.

³⁶Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 3.

primarily a praxis before it becomes a *theoria* so that one must first inhabit silence to commit to her ‘work of silence’. “Silence can’t be taught. You just have to sit down and do it.”³⁷

“Silence is context and end”³⁸ is the seabed of the ‘work of silence’ grounding all other theses of Ross. From this ground, silence could be understood either from a non-religious or religious approach: “the work of silence is neutral.”³⁹ To understand ‘silence as context’, one must be ushered into two types of “consciousness,” two types of “knowing,” two ways of “behaving” in the world, two ways of embodying one’s embodiment in the world, or two “minds.” The ‘left consciousness,’ the *linear mind*’ for Ross, has two potentials: either it proceeds in the world tendentiously caught in its assertive self-referentiality, as if the self is the only thing that exists, or one’s views about the world, or methods of knowing the truth are the only valid ones. Or it draws its energy from the more silent ‘right consciousness,’ identified by Ross as the *‘deep mind’*.⁴⁰

³⁷“Interview: Silent Witness,” *Reform Magazine* (June 2015): 16.

³⁸Maggie Ross, *Writing the Icon of the Heart: In Silence Beholding* (The Bible Reading Fellowship: Oxford, 2011), 9.

³⁹Maggie Ross, *Silence: A User’s Guide*, Volume 1: Process (Cascade Books: Oregon, 2014), 1.

⁴⁰To date there has been no systematic, contemporary, and multidisciplinary work on the meaning and value of silence as a universal, neutral ground of our lives of prayer and morality that I am aware of. There are serious attempts like Jesuit Thomas Dubay’s *Fire Within: St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and the Gospel on Prayer* (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 1989), or Shannon Craigo-Snell’s *Silence, Love and Death: Saying “Yes” to God in the Theology of Karl Rahner* (Marquette University Press: Wisconsin, 2008). But Dubay uses an interpretive lens that equates “contemplation” as “experienced presence” according to St. Teresa, or “awareness of divine inflow” for St. John of the Cross—both senses of contemplation falling short from the understanding of silence marked by the absence of any form of objective awareness, especially the awareness of divine presence, or the apophatic in theological term. Snell’s re-

The first potential leads to the abstraction and objectification of what's outside the self while favoring it and its many pursuits such as the drive to compete, the pursuit of the pleasure out of drugs (or social media), the addiction to corruption, or political or religious power and control – some “unwanted sound” and ways of doing violence to one's body or systems in general. The other potential of the ‘linear mind’ is on how it can proceed in the world “linguistically” and self-forgetfully because it is pliant, open, and fed by the silent, multidimensional depth of the ‘deep mind.’ In Biblical imagery, it is the ‘linear mind’ in its willingness and openness to fall on the ground like a seed. For Ross, the ‘linear mind’ cannot directly access the ‘deep mind’ but it can indirectly access it by way of the paradox of

interpretation of Rahner's thoughts on silence is worth considering even if it is done univocally through the lens of metaphysics and therefore, minus the insights from other disciplines: silence as God's incomprehensible distance, human-divine dialogue in freedom, the horizon of a mystery that can stir dread, a sense of terror, pain or void but at the same time, intimacy.

Within the Roman Catholic tradition, worth reading are Simone Weil's *Waiting for God* (New York: Putnam, 1951); Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2008); and Simon Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection: An Exploration of Christian Spirituality* (Templegate Publishers: Illinois, 1985). Other writings on silence include Anselm Grün, *The Challenge of Silence* (St. Pauls Publications: Makati, 1987); Peter-Damian Belisle, *The Language of Silence: The Changing Face of Monastic Solitude* (Orbis Books: New York, 2003); and *The Prayer of Love and Silence by a Carthusian* (Cistercian Publication, Inc.: Michigan, 1998) on some fundamental truths about prayer. See also, James A. Connor, *Silent Fire: Bringing the Spirituality of Silence to Everyday Life* (Crown Publishers: New York, 2002). Out in the market are the works of some Benedictine monks like John Main, Lawrence Freeman, Thomas Keating, and Basil Pennington. Though their writings on silence are pastorally available, yet they do not have the potent combinations of multidisciplinary, critical scholarship, contemplative praxis, commonsense practicalities, and universal accessibility.

“attentive receptivity” and self-surrender into silence. This ‘attentive receptivity’ could be facilitated by liminal keys to detachment and self-forgetfulness including among the many possibilities of religious aids like Bible reading, liturgy, praying the Rosary, retreats, helping selflessly and other means available in institutional religions like Christianity or Buddhism. Silence is the *context* because one has to make a choice: either one habitually informs one’s ‘linear mind’ by the more silent ‘deep mind,’ or characteristically proceeds in the world as if nothing exists beyond the linguistic capacity of the ‘linear brain.’ Even silence cannot compel one to choose the silent richness and depth of the ‘deep mind.’ But silence is there for the taking, should we say, waiting at the chapel or in-between Hail Marys, or in the silent raising and breaking of the Host. Silence is an *end* because nothing really matters within or at the end of the day but to dialogically return one’s ‘human speech’ or busyness into the fundamental reference of silence. “Words without silence lead to distortion and irrelevance within institutions.”⁴¹ From a more Christian parlance, the ‘deep mind’ is the field of the silence of transfiguring, kenotic love. It is the field of faithful Self-outpouring of the Divine into creation. God is more silent than humans can imagine, but it is a type of silence that is more self-forgetful or kenotic than humans can think of also. There is not a single millisecond that this divine self-outpouring stops.⁴² ‘Human speech’ or ‘linear minds’ informed by this self-outpouring begin to reflect the “peace that surpasses understanding” and where violence has no space.⁴³

⁴¹Maggie Ross, “Jesus in the Balance: Interpretation in the Twenty-First Century,” *Word & World* 29/2 (Spring 2009): 153.

⁴²Cf. Romans 8: 38-39 – Paul’s assertion of the absolute and inescapable enclosure of human beings within boundless divine love.

⁴³In the 2018 Global Peace Index released by Australia-based

Conclusion

Contemplative silence and its *praxis* and *theoria* (from a biblical perspective, through the lens of the desert *abbas* and *ammas*, and Maggie Ross with her ‘work of silence,’) serve as a confluence of reconstructive response to restrain personal or systemic violence in human speech. The above exposition on contemplative silence is framed within the general objective of protecting human rights, resolving conflicts, and promoting peace in the process. German philosopher and sociologist Theodor Adorno wrote that “after Auschwitz, there is no poetry.”⁴⁴ Perhaps more appropriately, there could be poetry that speaks of inherent human dignity more than the noise of violent human speech: poetic advocacy in which the noise of violent human speech can be named rather than subscribed to and then be subsumed back into silence for its resurrection. Primo Levi is known for this poetic but critical paradox in his scientific and literary works. Through this, Levi as a nonbeliever starkly named shame and guilt for people *merely surviving* amidst the ‘works of death’ of which violence partakes. Overcoming shame and guilt, people of faith likewise can engage in this ‘poetic advocacy’ by being fundamentally and

Institute for Economics and Peace, the Philippines is ranked 2nd among the least peaceful countries in the Asia Pacific region. Cf. <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/655975/phl-drops-one-rank-in-global-peace-index/story/> accessed 06 Oct. 2018.

⁴⁴The line has been the popular reading of Adorno, from the following original lines: “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today,” and then revised as “Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems.” Cf. author and art critic Brian A. Oard at <http://mindfulpleasures.blogspot.com/2011/03/poetry-after-auschwitz-what-adorno.html>

habitually soaked in contemplative silence; an advocacy that is also poetry of peace because its source is the resurrected Peacemaker⁴⁵ whose work is often done in silence, by way of humble, kenotic listening.⁴⁶ Homes, schools, churches, and other public spaces could become sanctuaries of contemplative silence out of which the “languages” of peacemaking, restraint from violent human speech, or promotion of human dignity emerge, and the chatter of personal and/or system-inflicted violence is continually transfigured.

⁴⁵John 14:27.

⁴⁶Robert Cardinal Sarah, *The Power of Silence: Against the Dictatorship of Noise* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Publications, 2017), 48.

The Prophetic Function of the Paraclete in our Ecclesial Life

Mirasol C. Navidad •

Abstract: This study attempts to explain, through the different Paraclete sayings (John 14: 17, 26; 15:26; 16: 13), how the Paraclete continues to reveal the message of salvation brought about by Jesus. The Paraclete's task is seen to guide the community in (re)interpreting and understanding Jesus' revelation in new circumstances and through the passing of time. The Paraclete's prophetic function is thus shown to be in teaching the disciples about the world that rejects the Spirit (14:17), confirming the rightness of their commitment while showing the world to be wrong about sin, justice and judgment (16:8-11). This is the function of Christian prophecy, and the prophetic function of the Paraclete who will convict the world of its sin and expose its guilt (16:8-11).

Keywords: Paraclete, Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, ekklesia, prophecy

Introduction

The Paraclete sayings in the farewell discourse (John 14-17) reveal a remarkably Johannine understanding of the Spirit and the church. Despite the various studies done by scholars on the Paraclete sayings with regard to the meaning of the Paraclete, its religious background, and its *Sitz im Leben*, there is still a dearth of literature on the Paraclete in relation to prophecy within the Church. One may presuppose that the most important

♦ Sr. Mirasol C. Navidad, RSCJ, Ph.D., is a professed member of the Society of the Sacred Heart. She currently teaches Scriptures at De La Salle University-Manila, Loyola School of Theology, Institute of Formation and Religious Studies, St. Vincent School of Theology, and San Carlos Major Seminary in Cebu City.

characteristic of the Paraclete sayings is their Christological focus.¹ However, they also reveal the Johannine understanding of the church.²

The idea of the Paraclete's teaching was already introduced in John 14:26: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you."³

However, in John 16:12-15, the teaching of the Paraclete no longer talks about remembrance of things past (ὑπομνήσει), but points toward the future (καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν). The author of the Fourth Gospel affirms that the Paraclete does not only interpret the old revelation (the earthly Jesus) but also disclose the "things to come," providing direction for the community in its work of witnessing.

It is our hope that this research would facilitate our reflection on the prophetic role of the Paraclete in the churches today. Ecclesial life reflects an assembly of persons gathered around the person of Jesus who invites us to take active part in raising prophetic voices in dealing with present-day issues: extrajudicial killings, hostilities in war torn areas, divisions between political groups, corruption, injustices, poverty, ecological disaster, etc. We believe that the *parakletos* with its prophetic presence in the churches will work in us, guide and direct us to a future that is full of hope.

¹Crinisor Stefan, "The Paraclete and Prophecy in the Johannine Community," in *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 27/2 (Fall 2005), 41.

²Dongsoo Kim, "The Paraclete the Spirit of the Church," in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5/2 (2002), 255-270.

³Scriptural texts are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

The Johannine Textual Platform of the Paraclete

In John 14:15-17 Jesus promises his disciples that he will send them “another Paraclete”:

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and is in you.

The text suggests that the disciples who love Jesus must continue to keep his commandments; it is promised that they will receive the Paraclete. Hence, the disciples will not be without that which they had in Jesus.⁴ This Paraclete is understood as the “Spirit of Truth,” a title used by the Fourth Evangelist to mean “the Spirit who communicates truth.”⁵

The meaning of the term *Paraclete* (Paraklētōs) is debated.⁶ The difficulty lies in the lack of linguistic background in either Hebrew or Aramaic. Thus its analysis can only depend on its Greek provenance and the translations that grew from it.⁷ Major translations

⁴David J. Hawkin, *The Johannine World: Reflections on the Theology of the Fourth Gospel and Contemporary Society* (New York: State University, 1996), 73.

⁵Ibid.

⁶George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 329. Bennema would refer to the complexity of the term itself as a difficult enterprise to explore. See Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel*, WUNT 2. 148 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 216.

⁷However, later Rabbinic Judaism used פִּרְקָלִים as a loan-word for παράκλητος. See Raymond. E. Brown, “The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 13 (1967), 115-116, Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* ((Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 7.

of παράκλητος include: 'Intercessor/Spokesman/ Mediator,'⁸ 'Helper,'⁹ 'Representative,'¹⁰ supporter/ Sponsor,¹¹ 'Exhorter/Comforter/Consoler,'¹² Counsellor,¹³ 'Teacher/Preacher,'¹⁴ 'Paraclete,'¹⁵ 'Advocate.'¹⁶ Given the con-

⁸Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. AB 29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966 and 1970), 117.

⁹Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 569. Bultmann argued on the basis of forced linguistic and conceptual association with the multiple 'helpers' that he discovered in Mandaean sources. Cf. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952), 1:164-183; 2: 1-92. However, Turner challenges Bultmann's position along this point with the following arguments: 1) that John speaks of but one Paraclete (on earth with the disciples), not a plurality of them; 2) the term *yawar*, which Bultmann translated from the Mandaean sources as 'helper,' rather 'bearers of (heavenly) light,' and 3) these figures have no forensic (legal) functions in the Mandaean literature. Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts – Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster Hendrickson), 78. Also refer to M. E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* (Heythrop Monographs 1; Huddersfield: Charlesworth, 1976), 95; Barclay Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John* (New York: UBS, 1980), 466-467.

¹⁰G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, SNTSMS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 87, 120.

¹¹Kenneth Grayston, 'The Meaning of PARAKLĒTOS,' *JSNT* 13 (1981) 67-82:67, 75.

¹²John G. Davies, 'The Primary Meaning of PARAKLHTOS,' *JThS* 4 (1953) 35-38:35-38; Barrett, 'Spirit,' 1-15.

¹³James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, vol 1 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 350; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 468, 478. This term is considered to be an adopted translation of the RSV and NIV, and could find some basis in e.g. Philo, *On Creation*, 23, where the writer speaks of God – without any *paraklētos* (for there was none beside him; God was alone) making the decision to confer benefits on the creation he was about to bring into being. Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, 78.

¹⁴E. Franck, *Revelation Taught: The Paraclete in the Gospel of John* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1985), 36.

¹⁵Brown, 'Paraclete,' 119; Burge, *Community*, 9; Ridderbos,

cepts associated with it, *παράκλητος* primarily carries a legal role.¹⁷ In John 14-16, the *Paraclete* becomes a counsel for the persecuted (16:7-11); the only defense he makes is of Jesus, by witnessing to him rather than at any point coming to the aid of the disciples themselves (15:26).¹⁸

The actual ministry of the *Paraclete*, according to John, is exercised in connection with the world as well as with the church.¹⁹ This is shown in the following manner: 1) in the church the *Paraclete* indwells the disciples (John 14:16-17; cf. Ezek 2:2); 2) the *Paraclete* teaches the disciples and makes them recall the instruction of Jesus himself (John 14:26); 3) the *Paraclete* also bears witness to Jesus and reveals the true nature of their Lord to his followers (15:6); and 4) as the Spirit of truth the *Paraclete* guides the church prophetically “into all the truth” (16: 13-15).²⁰ It is “the Spirit of Truth,” “the Spirit who communicates truth.”²¹ Significantly, the function of the “Spirit who communicates truth” is to continue the work of revelation in the community.²²

The Prophetic Features of the Paraclete

A number of Johannine scholars acknowledge the

Gospel, 500-504.

¹⁶Brown, ‘Paraclete,’ 116; Turner, *Spirit*, 77.

¹⁷Stephen S. Smalley, “The Paraclete”: Pneumatology in the Johannine Gospel and Apocalypse.” In *Exploring the Gospel of John in Honor of D. Moody Smith* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996), 291. Further, the Paraclete’s role in the courtroom is that the Paraclete acts for the defense, as an advocate.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Hawkin, *The Johannine World*, 76.

²²*Ibid.*

significance of prophecy in the Johannine community. From the vantage point of revelation, Burge opines that interest in the Paraclete has taken a significant turn for those who raise the point if the Paraclete is actually a disguised prophetic figure in John's community.²³ Johnston understands the Paraclete this way: "the Spirit Paraclete is the Spirit of God...an active divine power that becomes embodied in certain outstanding leaders within the Catholic Church."²⁴ The specific attributes of the Paraclete are thus present in the prophets, pastors, and church leaders in the Johannine church.²⁵

One contention here is that in the Johannine community all believers were considered potential prophets. They, in fact had similar anointing; the same Spirit that rested (Gk. μένειν, μένειν or remain) on Jesus, the Prophet, remained in them as well.²⁶ The Fourth Gospel seems to give the impression that prophecy was too important to be left to the prophets alone.²⁷ The Johannine community was a charismatic community in which the exalted Christ was still speaking through the Paraclete to the believers.²⁸ Significantly to John, the Paraclete will not only continue Jesus' revelatory work but will complete it.²⁹

²³Burge, *The Anointed Community*, 38.

²⁴Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*, 119.

²⁵Burge, 22.

²⁶See Stefan, "The Paraclete and Prophecy in the Johannine Community," 273-296.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 274. Stefan further clarifies that usually scholars have been content to mention briefly that there may have been some prophets in the Johannine community, but they have not attempted to point out *who* these prophets were, *what* they did, and *how* they did it.

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹*Ibid.*

The Sending of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit

¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.... ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (John 14:17, 26)

At the beginning of the narrative in chapter 14, Jesus comforted his disciples with the pledge that his departure was not a final bereavement—that this will be to their advantage, for then the Spirit will be sent in his place.³⁰ The Spirit (14:15-18) is thus the distinguishing feature of this promise.³¹ When Jesus has ascended, God's purpose will be made apparent through his followers as they will be living in the age of the Spirit.³² Likewise, the emphasis on Jesus' promise is on the fact that the fragile followers of Jesus will have authority to imitate him.³³

Paraclete and its Associated Terms

In terms of the identification, the Paraclete is distinguishable by four names: paraclete (14:26; 15:26; 16:7), by “another paraclete” (14:16), as “the Spirit of Truth” (14:17; 15:26; 16:13) and “the Holy Spirit” (14:26). These titles are thus found in the following: 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 16:13.

³⁰Keith Warrington, *The Message of the Holy Spirit: The Spirit of Encounter* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 99.

³¹*Ibid.*, 100.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*

14:16	<i>I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you always.</i>
14:26	The Paraclete , the Holy Spirit <i>whom the Father will send in my name</i> , will instruct you in everything, and remind you of all that I told you.
15:26	When the Paraclete comes, the Spirit of Truth <i>who comes from the Father</i> and <i>whom I myself will send from the Father</i> he will bear witness on my behalf.
16:7	Yet I tell you the sober truth: It is much better for you that I go. If I fail to go, the Paraclete will never come to you. Whereas if I go, <i>I will send him to you.</i>

The above passages shows “[t]he same origin from Father and Son is implicit in the statement that everything the Father has belongs to the Son and it can, therefore be said that all the Paraclete teaches he takes from the Son (16:15).”³⁴ Moloney argues that “this insistence that the Paraclete comes from the Father (14:16, 26), even though Jesus now involves himself in the sending of the Spirit of Truth (14:7), points to the identity of the origin of the former Paraclete (Jesus) and the other Paraclete (Holy Spirit) in 14:16.”³⁵

Paraclete as Teacher

One of the roles and functions of the Paraclete, as far as the disciples are concerned, is that of a teacher. Here, the Paraclete is the teacher who will complete the message.³⁶ Thus:

³⁴John Wijngaards, MHM, *The Spirit in John* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1988), 52-53.

³⁵Francis J. Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor: Reading John 13-21* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1998), 71 n. 43.

³⁶*Ibid.*

14:26	The Paraclete , the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, <i>will instruct you in everything</i> , and remind you of all that I told you.
16:13	When he comes, however, being the Spirit of Truth , <i>he will guide you to all truth</i> .
16:13	He will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears, <i>and will announce to you the things to come</i> .

Likewise, the Paraclete will draw on Jesus' own image presented in the following:

14:26	The Paraclete , the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will instruct you in everything, <i>and remind you of all that I told you</i> .
16:13	When he comes, however, being the Spirit of Truth , he will guide you to all truth. <i>He will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears</i> , and will announce to you the things to come.
16:14	In doing this <i>he will give glory to me, because he will have received from me what he will announce to you</i> .

Central to all these passages is the figure of the Paraclete. It is apparent that the term Paraclete must have been used for a special theological reason.³⁷ What we can gather here is that “the gospel in its present form presents the Paraclete as the realization of the Spirit.”³⁸

³⁷Ibid. 54.

³⁸Ibid.

This is the Spirit of Truth. (v. 17)

Why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of truth? As it is claimed, the identity of the other Paraclete is now made clear: he is the Spirit of truth as presented in John 4:23-24.³⁹ For Morris, this is an unusual expression, found nowhere else in the New Testament and not even common in Jewish writings.⁴⁰ Rather, it is found in the Qumran scrolls.⁴¹ The Paraclete is emphatically and repeatedly identified with ‘the Spirit of Truth,’ “The Father will give you another paraclete, who will be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth...” (14:16-17). In the context of chapter 14, Jesus has just been characterized as “the truth” (14:6), in keeping with statements already made in the prologue (1:14, 7).⁴² In all the dimensions, the Spirit is involved: in the truth regarding Jesus; as the eschatological gift of God; in imparting true knowledge of God; operative in both worship and sanctification; and pointing people to the person of Jesus.⁴³ In John’s perspective, truth means revelation, and Jesus Christ is both the act and the

³⁹D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 500.

⁴⁰Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans, 1995), 154.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 154-155.

⁴²Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1999), 438. Presents the concept of truth as depicted in the Fourth Gospel which encompasses the following features: a) Firstly, truthfulness as against falsehood: “to speak the truth” means to make a true rather than false statement; b) Secondly, truth in its certainty as compared to previous, preliminary expressions: this is its eschatological dimension; c) Thirdly, truth as a distinguishable body of knowledge with actual propositional content; d) Fourthly, truth as a sphere of operation, be it worship or sanctification; and e) Lastly, truth as relational fidelity.

⁴³*Ibid.*

content of that revelation, “I am the truth” (14:6).⁴⁴ As Wijngaards argues, the truth stands for everything that came to light in Jesus Christ.⁴⁵

T. G. Brown claims that ‘truth’ plays a role in delineating between the world and the realm of God elsewhere in the Gospel, and it is the Gospel’s dualistic context that best accounts for the description of the Paraclete-Spirit as ‘of Truth,’ or as ‘the true Spirit.’⁴⁶ In John 8:43-47 truth and falsehood are used to divide those who are from God and those who are from the devil:

Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God.

The passage itself shows that Jesus’ word is truth because he speaks the words of God, while the words of the devil are lies.⁴⁷ And it is in this context where we should understand the Evangelist’s use of the title ‘Spirit of truth.’ Describing the Paraclete as the “Spirit of Truth” establishes a “competitive claim, characterizing the Paraclete as a representative of the God-realm against the spiritual representatives of ‘the ruler of the

⁴⁴Ibid., Wijngaards, 74.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Tricia Gates Brown, “Spirit in the Writings of John: Johannine Pneumatology in Social Scientific Perspective,” in *JSNT* Sup 253 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 200.

⁴⁷Ibid.

world.”⁴⁸ Hence, the Spirit of Truth is the *good* Paraclete, in comparison to the false ones of the world, who are unable to provide access to truth because they are not of Divine origin.

In John 14:17, this Paraclete is the “Spirit of Truth,” an expression that was current in Judaism.⁴⁹ Montague clarifies that truth here does not mean abstract or philosophical truth, neither does it signify the moral virtue of veracity.⁵⁰ The term suggests something more akin to the view of the Qumran covenanters, for whom it meant God’s revealed way of life triumphant in the final battle over all enemies of God.⁵¹ As understood, the “spirit of truth” is a messenger helping the sons of light in their struggle against the powers of darkness led by the spirit of falsehood.⁵²

Moreover, as stated in 16:13, the Spirit of Truth will accompany the disciples ‘into all the truth’ (16:13). The Paraclete is called the Spirit of Truth not only because the Paraclete represents truth in opposition to the false spirits of the world, but because the Paraclete provides believers with access to ‘truth.’ So, verse 17 affirms that this Spirit abides within the lives of believers.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Köstenberger, *John*, 438.

⁵⁰George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth in the Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 351.

⁵¹Ibid. The Qumran literature affirms that God placed within humankind “two spirits so that he would walk with them until the moment of his visitation; they are the spirits of truth and deceit.” However, these parallels are merely those of language, not thought. See Köstenberger, *John*, 438.

⁵²Ibid.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything. (v. 26)

We have seen that the statement of Jesus tells us that the Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth (14:17), and that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit (14:26). Here, the Paraclete is described: a) First, the Holy Spirit will be sent by the Father in Jesus' name; b) Second, the Holy Spirit will teach the disciples all things; and c) Third, the Holy Spirit will bring to the disciples' remembrance all that Jesus has said.⁵³ As discussed, the titles "Holy Spirit" and "Paraclete" are interchangeable.⁵⁴ The task of the Paraclete in this passage (vv. 25-26) goes beyond what is said of him in vv. 16-17.

In the Fourth Gospel the disciples are presented to have failed throughout the ministry of Jesus, especially in their understanding of Jesus.⁵⁵ Thus, one of the Spirit's principal tasks is to remind the disciples of Jesus' teaching and thus, in the new situation after the resurrection, to help them grasp its significance. Hence, to teach them what it meant.⁵⁶ The promise articulated in v. 26 has in view the Spirit's role to the first generation of disciples—for them to have full understanding of the truth of Jesus Christ.⁵⁷ Carson is clear in saying that "the Spirit's ministry in this respect was not to bring qualitatively new revelation, but to complete, to fill out, the revelation brought by Jesus himself."⁵⁸

Admittedly, the Paraclete theme is rather complex. However, a closer look at the declaration of Jesus

⁵³Niceta M. Vargas, *Word and Witness: An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013), 321.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵Carson, *John*, 505.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

regarding the sending of the Spirit-Paraclete reveals the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete. Barrett presents significant points: First, in the early pages of the gospel, the references to the Spirit were most closely connected with the church's worship. Second, in the Farewell Discourses, the Paraclete is the direct equivalent of the Spirit of truth.⁵⁹ Franck adds that the Paraclete is connected with the Spirit. He argues that the Paraclete is a divine, but abstract power. Hence, he notes "[t]he Spirit is the power, which renews, gives life and strength (3:5f; 6:63; 20:22). True worship is done in the Spirit (14:23)."⁶⁰ With the arguments presented, it is clear the word 'Paraclete' is applied to the Holy Spirit/the Spirit of Truth. Likewise, John 14:26 does actually identify the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit.

In the Fourth Gospel, a group of five passages refer to the Holy Spirit as "Paraclete" or "Spirit of truth" (14:16, 17, 25, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7–11, 13–15). Besides their distinct terminologies, what sets these passages apart from others is that first, it all happens in the "Farewell

⁵⁹C. K. Barrett, 'The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel,' in *JTS NS* 1 (1950), 1-15:12. In the same note, for Dunn 'in Spirit' must imply 'by inspiration of the Spirit' – that is, charismatic worship – for in the immediate context, worship in Spirit is set in pointed contrast to worship in temple and sacred place. J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (NTL) (London: SCM, 1975), 353.

⁶⁰Franck, *Revelation Taught*, 125. However, Johnston clarifies that the identification between the Paraclete and the Holy Spirit was made in order to refute the heretical claims about angelic intercessors. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, 119. In the same manner, R. E. Brown admits that the functions of the Paraclete are not *prima facie* those of the Spirit. See R. E. Brown, 'The Paraclete,' 113n. Smalley, *John*, 261. He reminds by saying that we shall not be mistaken if we identify the Johannine Paraclete with the Spirit himself.

Discourses” (chaps. 14–17); second, they refer to the coming of the Spirit; and; third, they describe functions completely different from the ones found in the Gospel’s narrative sections (chaps. 1–13, 18–21). While in those sections the Holy Spirit is mostly a life-giving power through which God regenerates and transforms God’s believers (3:3, 5, 6; 6:63; 7:37, 38), the predominant idea in the Farewell Discourses features that of an Instructor, a Witness, and a Guide—concepts that go way beyond the impression of an impersonal power. In fact, those five passages “provide the strongest evidence for conceiving of the Spirit as a distinct figure, an independent agent or actor.”⁶¹

In 14:15-17 Jesus promises his disciples that he will send them “another paraclete.” This implies, though, that a *Paraclete* already exists. Given the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit, one must grant that the first Paraclete was believed to be Jesus himself.⁶² However, there are different views along this point: first, there is a view that considers the idea that Jesus and the Spirit can be linked under the concept of Paraclete;⁶³ second, others consider the Paraclete to be distinct from Jesus while others see the Paraclete as the Presence of the Risen Christ in the community; third,

⁶¹Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 149.

⁶²J.D. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit*, vol. 2: *Pneumatology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 17; D. Lamont, *Studies in the Johannine Writings* (London: James Clark, 1956), 118-119. But, Brown mentions of another interpretation of ‘another *Paraclete*’ as he says” ‘The Father will give you another, a Paraclete,’ thus ruling out any allusion to a previous *Paraclete*; however, this translation is not generally received. Brown, ‘Paraclete,’ 114n. Also refer to the studies of J. C. Meagher, ‘John: 1:14 and the New Temple,’ in *JBL* 88 (1969), 65-66.

⁶³Morris, “The Jesus of St. John,” in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 147.

still others consider Jesus and the Paraclete as identical.⁶⁴ We argue that although there is a glimpse of functional similarity between Jesus (other Paraclete) and the Paraclete, however, these two characters are not identical.⁶⁵

Ultimately the fundamental role of the Paraclete is expressed by the phrase in v. 16, “he might be with you forever.” As Jesus’ presence itself has been crucial for the group identity of the disciples, so the presence of the Paraclete in the future community of believers is of crucial importance for keeping its self-identity. This

⁶⁴Anandaraj argues that Jesus is the heavenly *Paraclete*, since the *Paraclete* is the one to remain on earth with the disciples and their followers. He further pointed out that Spirit-*Paraclete* and Jesus are not assimilated into each other. Therefore, they cannot be identical. See F. Anandaraj, ‘Johannine Understanding of the *Paraclete*,’ in *Living Word* 86 (1980), 267-286:270. According to Olsson, for John, Jesus is the Word, the Life, the Light and God, but not the Spirit. B. Olsson, ‘Deus semper maior? On God in the Johannine Writings’ in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives: Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel – Århus 1997*, eds. J. Nissen and S. Pedersen, JSNTSS 182 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1999), 143-171: 159. Dunn says, ‘The lengthening time gap between John and the historical Jesus, and the continuing delay of the parousia do not mean a steadily increasing distance between each generation of Christians and Christ. On the contrary, each generation is as close to Jesus as the last – and the first – because the *Paraclete* is the immediate link between Jesus and his disciples in every generation.’ See Dunn, *Jesus*, 351. Here, Dunn views the *Paraclete* only as a link between Jesus and the Church. In the same manner for U. Schnelle the work of the *Paraclete* cannot be understood simply as a fully equivalent continuation of the life of Jesus. See Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, trans. L. McMaloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987), 27. From the different arguments presented, scholars differ regarding the exact relationship between Jesus and the *Paraclete*.

⁶⁵Mirasol C. Navidad, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (*John 20:22*) as the Fulfillment of Johannine Pneumatological Expectation, unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Univesity, 2016), 198.

presence of the Paraclete in the community is described more concretely in v.17: “he abides with you, and he will be with you.” In short, the function of the Paraclete is indwelling the community of disciples. Thus the various functions of the Paraclete in the farewell discourse originate from this basic function, which is indwelling in or among the disciples.⁶⁶

In the light of verse 26, “...and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you...,” the Spirit’s role is to bring to remembrance the words of the earthly Jesus. In this verse the new revelation what the Spirit-Paraclete brings is in fact a continuation of the revelation brought by the first Paraclete (Jesus); Jesus in his exalted state continues to speak to the believers through the Spirit. As Betz rightly puts it, “on earth the ever abiding paraclete works side by side with the exalted Lord Christ who is in heaven.”⁶⁷ The Paraclete is the only one who “reveals the mind of Christ” to the community.⁶⁸ Therefore, Christ in his exalted state will continue to speak giving direction to the church (*ekklesia*). Since during his earthly ministry Jesus’ words included predictive prophecies (John 12:32; 13:19; 16:4), it is only natural to assert that he will continue to predict things (through the Paraclete) even after his exaltation.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Kim, 264.

⁶⁷Otto Betz, *Der Paraklet* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 149.

⁶⁸Bruce Vawter, “John’s Doctrine of the Spirit: A Summary of his Eschatology,” in *A Companion to John* (New York: Alba House, 1977), 179. It may be difficult to point out the content of the “new revelation” brought by the Paraclete, some scholars believe that it is similar to other examples mentioned in some New Testament books and other Second Temple Jewish writings. Cf. Stefan, “Pneuma,” 284.

⁶⁹See further discussion on Jesus’ predictive words in the work of Adele Reinhartz, “Jesus as Prophet: Predictive Prolepses in the Fourth Gospel,” *JSNT* 36 (1989): 3-16.

The Spirit of Truth who Testifies

But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me. (John 15:26)

In this particular Paraclete saying, the Paraclete is introduced as the one who will bear witness to Jesus. The Christocentric function is obvious in that if Jesus came to glorify the Father, the Paraclete will come to glorify Jesus. The Paraclete is the Spirit who bears witness to the Truth, that is Jesus. The word μαρτυρήσει (bear witness; testify) reflects the setting of the post-Easter community of mission. Significantly, the disciples representing the future Christian community, will also participate in the missionary work of the Paraclete. The witness of the Paraclete and the witness of disciples are not in contradiction. They are, in fact co-existent.⁷⁰ In terms of the Spirit being sent to believers, we see a movement that in John 14:16, Jesus is described as requesting the Father to give the Spirit to his followers.⁷¹ However, in John 15:26 Jesus declares that he will send the Spirit from the Father, while in 14:26 John declares that the Father will send the Spirit in the name of Jesus.⁷² And in 6:13 he simply announces that the Spirit will come.⁷³ Warrington clarifies that “the sending of the Spirit is not a unilateral act on the part of Jesus or the Father but part of the divine plan to take care of believers in the physical absence of Jesus.”⁷⁴

John 15:26-27 features the idea that Jesus’ mission

⁷⁰Kim, 266.

⁷¹Warrington, *The Message of the Holy Spirit*, 104.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

parallels that of the Paraclete:

8:42	Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.
13:3	Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God...
16:27	...for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.
17:8	...for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

In fact, R. E. Brown shows very clearly how the functions of the Paraclete, formally identified as the Holy Spirit (14:26) and the Spirit of Truth (14:17; 15:26; cf. 16:13), are copied from those of Jesus himself.⁷⁵

14:26	When he has departed the Paraclete will teach (διδάπαντα) and remind (ὑπομνήσει) the disciples of all that he has said to them.
15:26	He will also bear witness to Jesus (μαρτυρήσει).
16:13	He will speak what he hears (ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει) and expound the things to come (τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ).
16:14	Jesus declares, 'he will take from what is me and expound it to you' (ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν).

This point is further reinforced by the clause, 'who comes from the Father,' which refers to the mission of

⁷⁵R. E. Brown, *John*, 1141 ff.

the Spirit, in analogy with the mission of the Son.⁷⁶ Here, we see clearly that the Paraclete can be seen as having the same function as Jesus in his words and works on earth.⁷⁷ He is Jesus' witness.⁷⁸ That in the midst of the hatred described by Jesus in 15:18-21, the Paraclete sent from the Father will continue to bear witness to Jesus.⁷⁹ Moreover, the other Paraclete, the Spirit of truth whom Jesus will send from the Father and who proceeds from the Father, continues this revelation (15.26), along with the disciples, who have been with Jesus from the beginning hearing his word and seeing his works⁸⁰ although the Paraclete cannot speak to the world directly, but has to make use of the disciples to do this.⁸¹

With this in mind, Hawkin sees its importance in preparing the reader for the next Paraclete passage in chapter 16 where we have a forensic description of his work.⁸² Further, the Paraclete, who will be with Jesus' followers will "dwell" with them (14:16-17), whose task it is to "teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14:26), is the only assurance of their consolation amidst the hatred of the world.⁸³ It is emphasized that since the Revealer must return to the Father who sent him, it is the Paraclete, "even the Spirit of truth," who assures the permanence of the revelation in the world by continuing to bear

⁷⁶Carson, *John*, 529.

⁷⁷Schnackenburg, *John*, 117.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 70.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Hawkin, *The Johannine World*, 74.

⁸³Stanley B. Marrow, *The Gospel of John* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995), 285.

witness to the Revealer in the community of those who believe in him.⁸⁴

This particular passage is situated in a setting which highlights the world's rejection of Jesus and his disciples: 'If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also' (15:21). So, the world's rejection of Christ (15:22 and 15:24) establishes its guilt. Thus, the repeated references to conflict, guilt, and witness establish the forensic character of the passage.⁸⁵ The forensic function of the Paraclete is explicit in 15:26, that of a witness.⁸⁶ One significance of 15:26 is an illumination why the Spirit is called an 'Advocate.' The context of our passage, John 15:26 presents a litigation between God/Jesus and the world, and the matter in question is about the debate on Messiahship and divine Sonship of Jesus.⁸⁷ Specifically, the dispute between Jesus and the world is

⁸⁴Ibid. It is likewise noted in this verse 1) First, that the Spirit, sent by the Son "from the Father," "proceeds from the Father" (cf. "I will send him to you"); 2) Second, in spite of the fact that the Paraclete who "will bear witness to me" here (15:26), the evangelist will later claim the same task to himself: "He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you also may believe" (19:35); and "This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true (21:24). What is highlighted in this point is that the claim is not necessarily limited to the evangelist. Rather, it extends to all the proclaimers of the gospel down the ages, and, in doing so, lends even greater significance to the reminder that the Paraclete "will bear witness to me" (15:26).

⁸⁵Robert P. Menzies, "John and the Development of Early Christian Pneumatology," in *The Spirit and Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Russell P. Spittler* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 46.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Andrew T. Lincoln, 'Trials, Plots and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel,' in *JSNT* 56 (1994), 3-30. Also refer to Felix Porsch, *Pneuma und Wort: Ein Exegetischer Beitrag zur Pneumatologie des Johannesevangeliums* (Frankfurt: Knecht, 1974), 222-227; J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 220-232, 523-527.

about Jesus' claims to have life in himself, to make life available to people and to have an intimate relationship with God.⁸⁸ In the farewell discourse, Jesus prepares his disciples for what will happen; the legal proceedings with the world will not end and the witness will not be tight-lipped, because then the case would be lost by default.⁸⁹

Whom I will send to you from the Father. (v.16:26a)

What calls our attention of this phrase is the emphatic use of the pronoun 'Εγώ (Ego), which emphasizes Christ's active role in the process of sending the Holy Spirit. This point is affirmed by Newman and Nida as they say, "The locational relations in the clause 'I will send Him to you from the Father' are rather complex; and since the role of Jesus as the agent is primarily causative, it may be necessary to translate this clause 'I will cause him to go from the Father and to come to you.'"⁹⁰

As to the time of the sending of the Spirit, Hendriksen argues, "[t]he sending of the Spirit was a matter of the future. Pentecost had not yet arrived. Hence, the future tense is used – 'I will send.'"⁹¹ In the same way Godet comments that "[i]n saying: whom I will send, Jesus is necessarily thinking of his approaching reinstatement in the divine condition; and in adding from the Father, He acknowledges His subor-

⁸⁸See, Turner, *Spirit*, 85-86.

⁸⁹Allen Billington, 'The Paraclete and Mission in the Fourth Gospel,' in *Mission and Meaning: Essays Presented to Peter Cotterell*, eds. A. Billington, T. Lane and M. Turner (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 90-115: 100.

⁹⁰Barclay, *A Translator's Handbook*, 497.

⁹¹William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953), 317.

dination to the Father, even when He shall have recovered that condition.”⁹² Morris likewise explains the time of the Spirit’s coming. He says,

Jesus is surely saying that, when he leaves this earth to go to be with his Father, he will send the Spirit to them, the Spirit who is with the Father. There appears to be some emphasis on the fact that, even though it is Jesus who will send the Spirit, it is from the Father that he will send him. Indeed, it can be said that it is from the Father that the Spirit proceeds.⁹³

Evident here is the fact that just as the first phrase of John 15:26 highlights the active role of the Spirit in coming, the second phrase emphasizes the active role of Jesus in sending the Spirit. Bernard expresses the different ways in which the sending of the Spirit is highlighted: “So also at 16:7, the promise is that Jesus will send the Paraclete; but at 14:16 He is to be given by the Father in response to the prayer of Jesus, and at 14:26 the Father is to send Him in the name of Jesus.”⁹⁴

Admittedly, this passage contains some exegetical difficulty.⁹⁵ Menzies identifies significant factors along this point: a) that its rejection (unbelief) of Christ is the essence of its sin; b) that although the world crucified Jesus as a criminal, his death, resurrection, and exaltation vindicate him as the Righteous One; c) Jesus’ vindication establishes that those who oppose him

⁹²Frederick L. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1893), 304.

⁹³Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 533.

⁹⁴John Henry Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928), 498.

⁹⁵Menzies, “John and the Development of Early Christian Pneumatology,” 46.

already stand condemned.⁹⁶ In this context, the Paraclete, then will bear witness against the world.⁹⁷

When Jesus departs, the cosmic trial continues through the Paraclete and the disciples, and Jesus will pass his 'advocacy' to the Spirit.⁹⁸ With their relationship with Jesus, the disciples now have become identified with Jesus, and also with the trial. So, the conflict between Jesus and 'the Jews' is paradigmatic for the trial between the believers (guided by the Paraclete) and the world.⁹⁹ We see in John 14:18 that Jesus reassures the disciples that he would not leave them ὀρφανούς or helpless in the face of the world's persecution. Jesus would come to them; for they would have an advocate in the legal process.¹⁰⁰

What exactly are the forensic functions of the Paraclete? John 15:26 stresses the Paraclete's role as witness in a world that would hate and persecute the disciples (15:18-16:4). John does not offer any explanation in what way the Spirit bears witness.¹⁰¹ However, it would seem that it is in the way the Spirit dwells in believers and leads them in the right way.¹⁰² As the Spirit leads and directs them, so they are led into fuller understanding of who and what Jesus was and to a firmer commitment to his cause.¹⁰³

⁹⁶Ibid., 46-47.

⁹⁷Ibid., 47.

⁹⁸Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom*, 234.

⁹⁹Porsch, *Pneuma*, 224.

¹⁰⁰David Earl Holwerda, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in the Gospel of John: A Critique of Rudolf Bultmann's Present Eschatology* (Kampen: Kok, 1959), 43-48. Ridderbos refuses to accept the idea of the Paraclete acting as Advocate in a cosmic trial taking place before God as prosecutor or public defender in a trial that is still undecided. Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 531-532.

¹⁰¹Morris, *Jesus*, 161.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

Windisch is convinced that the witness of the Paraclete is independent of the disciples.¹⁰⁴ De la Potterie highlights that the Paraclete's witness is formally distinguished from the disciples' witness; the Paraclete's witness is a completely interior one, directed, not to the world, but to the conscience of the disciples to enlighten and strengthen them in times of persecution.¹⁰⁵ But, Windisch and de la Potterie seem to separate the witness of the Paraclete and that of the disciples. Bennema however argues that there are perhaps not two distinct kinds of witness but instead two modes of witness, i.e. coordination instead of separation.¹⁰⁶ With this proposal the Paraclete is viewed as one who bears witness to Jesus in and through (the witness of) the disciples. And that the central object of the Paraclete's witness is to the world, "[a]nd when he comes he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment..." (Jn 16:8). The Paraclete engages the world through the mission of the disciples.¹⁰⁷

Further, the phrase ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ is the first mention of direct witness of the Spirit himself (15:26). The verb μαρτυρῶ is also used in the first explicit instruction for the disciples to be witnesses. (15:27). Here, the seeming continuity between Jesus as Paraclete and the Spirit as Paraclete is seen in the similarity between the bases for their legitimacy as witnesses to the truth. Therefore, the qualification of

¹⁰⁴Hans Windisch, 'Jesus and the Spirit in the Gospel of John' in *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel* ed. J. Reumann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 27-38: 9.

¹⁰⁵De la Potterie, "The Truth in Saint John," *The Interpretation of John*. (London: SPCK, 1986), 60-61; 'Paraclete,' 133, 135.

¹⁰⁶Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom*, 234.

¹⁰⁷Billington, "The Paraclete and Mission, 108-109.

the Spirit as a witness is based on his being sent by Jesus and his coming from the Father (15:26).

The Spirit of Truth who Comes from the Father. (v. 15:26b)

In our previous discussion we see that the Spirit is characterized by the quality of truth. Lange argues how this revelation is built upon a previous statement of his qualities. He says that “[H]e is first promised as the Spirit of faith and of the living knowledge of Christ (14:16). Here He is promised as the Spirit of steadfast testimony for Christ.”¹⁰⁸ So this sense of the true testimony to be given by the Spirit is certainly evident in this phrase, but there is also something more profound that reflects the very nature or character of the Spirit, as Bernards cites his opinion in saying that,

In this Last Discourse, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας is but another name for the Paraclete who is to be sent after Jesus has been withdrawn from the sight of men [sic]. The spirit of truth is the Spirit which brings truth and impresses it on the conscience of the world. In this passage the leading thought is of the witness to Jesus, infallibly true, however perverted the opinion of the world about Him may be. The phrase τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας has a double meaning. It basically 1) is the Spirit which brings truth and gives true testimony, but 2) this is the case because the Spirit has truth as the essential characteristic of His being. So, also the Logos is πλήρης ἀληθείας (1:14), and Jesus says, later in the discourse, Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια (14:6).¹⁰⁹

Not only is the Spirit the One who acts and testifies truly, but He is also the One who is truth as the essence or core of His existence. The Spirit of truth, then, is a

¹⁰⁸John P. Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan publishing House, 1987), 469.

¹⁰⁹Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 499.

significant expansion on the meaning of the noun *Paraclete* that is introduced in the first phrase of this verse. In a way this allows us to equate the *Paraclete* and the Spirit.

Moreover, what we notice from our passage, Jn 15:26, is the shifting of attention from persecution to the role of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit bears witness to Jesus and the Paraclete's witness is directed toward the world.¹¹⁰ Morris reiterated this point by saying that the particular function of the Spirit is that of witness, and specifically of witness to Christ.¹¹¹ Noticeably, the synonym, Spirit of Truth, used here for the Paraclete functions differently from its usage elsewhere.¹¹² So, in John 15:26, the Spirit of Truth bears witness about Jesus to the world.¹¹³

What is significant here is that the disciples who represent the future Christian community, will also engage in the missionary work of the Paraclete. And that the witness of the Paraclete and the witness of disciples are not after all separate; however, they are in fact co-existent.¹¹⁴ The Paraclete will do his work through the believing community. Noticeably, the second person plural ὑμεῖς [hūmeîs or you] in 15:27 not only includes the disciples from the period of Jesus' earthly life, but also all believers for all time.

¹¹⁰Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), 216.

¹¹¹Morris, *John*, 683.

¹¹²Ibid. For instance, in T. Judah 20:1, 3, 5, "So understand, my children, that two spirits await an opportunity with humanity: the spirit of truth and the spirit of error...the things of truth and the things of error are written in the affections of man[sic].

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Kim, "The Paraclete," 266.

The Spirit who Speaks only what is Heard

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:13)

This passage is still part of the Paraclete passage as it is evident from the use of “the Spirit of Truth” in v. 13. Here, for the third time the Paraclete is called “the Spirit of truth” (14:17, 15:26). The focus here is upon the Paraclete’s relation not to the external world but to the disciples.¹¹⁵ We note that this is the last passage concerning the action of the Spirit with regard to the truth, in the context of the coming of the Spirit of truth.¹¹⁶ “He will guide you into all the truth”¹¹⁷ brings us back to what the Psalmist says in reference to the true knowledge of God that believers desire of him so as to be able to “walk” in its light (e.g. Ps 25:5; 86:11). In that truth the Spirit will from now on guide the disciples and in fullness (“all truth”).¹¹⁸

We note here that the Paraclete *will guide you in* (Gk. *en* is the best reading; *eis*, ‘into,’ as in NIV, is secondary) all truth. Carson commented that “if there is a distinction between ‘*in* all truth’ and ‘*into* all truth,’ it is that the latter hints at the truth that the disciples have not yet in any sense penetrated, while ‘*in* all truth’ suggests an exploration of truth already principally

¹¹⁵Montague, *The Holy Spirit*, 359-360.

¹¹⁶Ridderbos, *John*, 535.

¹¹⁷Michaels notes that the phrase “in all the truth” is *not* the scientific or philosophical truth about the natural world, not the things humans can learn on their own by rational inquiry or observation. Rather, as Jesus will quickly point out, it is *his* truth, in the sense of the truth the Father has given him to make known, the “still much more” that is left to say (v. 12). See Michaels, *John*, 836.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

disclosed.¹¹⁹ Carson further expounds his point, “Jesus himself is the truth (14:6); now the Spirit of truth leads the disciples into all the implications of the truth, the revelation, intrinsically bound up with Jesus Christ. There is no other locus of truth; this is *all truth*.¹²⁰

Morris comments that “there are vistas of truth set before them which they cannot as yet enter, but they will enter when the Spirit comes.”¹²¹ So, as the days go by the Spirit will lead them deeper and deeper into a knowledge of truth.¹²²

It is worth investigating the formula “guide you into all the truth” with the following expressions:

...speak whatever he hears...

It is expressed that the Paraclete ‘will not speak on his own,’ but will speak whatever he hears.’ In other words, the Paraclete will say the same as Jesus says, as revealer on earth, of his relationship with the Father who sent him.¹²³ Schnackenburg is convinced that if this idea of mission is extended, “this emphasis ought to bring the connection between the Paraclete and Jesus and the continuity of Jesus’ revelation into prominence in the present saying about the Paraclete (v. 14).”¹²⁴ With this phrase the reader is being reminded that the

¹¹⁹Carson, *John*, 539. He also pointed out that if a distinction is to be maintained between the two prepositions, the one suggested above seems much more likely than the alternative suggestion, that *eis* (‘into’) is original and here means ‘into the very heart of the truth’ – an instance of a rather periphrastic reading. Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 1.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 539-540.

¹²¹Morris, *John*, 699.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 700.

¹²³See John 7:17f; 8:28; 14:10; also refer to 5:19, 30; 8:42.

¹²⁴Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 135.

period of the Spirit is still an in-between time.¹²⁵ In fact R. E. Brown asserts:

We find no evidence that Johannine theology ever abandoned the hope of the final return of Jesus in visible glory, although the Gospel clearly puts more emphasis on all the eschatological features that have already been realized in Jesus' first coming. The question is not one of the presence of Jesus in and through the Paraclete as opposed to the coming of Jesus in glory, but one of the relative importance to be given to each.¹²⁶

From the text we see that the author insists there are things "yet to come". That "the revealing task of the Paraclete points toward these things that are yet to come (v. 13b). Some scholars have noticed that prophecy might include the prediction of the future, a disclosure of the things to come.¹²⁷ Moloney argues that the gift of the Spirit does not mark the end of the story but signals a new stage after the departure and glorification of

¹²⁵Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 87.

¹²⁶R.E. Brown, "The Paraclete," 113.

¹²⁷Scholars who noticed prophecy in this regard includes: David E. Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 89; Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 222-29; C. M. Robeck, "The Gift of Prophecy in Acts and Paul," in *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 5 (1975): 50. Stefan in his article further clarifies the predictive function of Christian prophecy with the following points: 1) That it was the general view that the Old Testament prophets had been predictors of the future. Hence, in the Pentateuch Moses is presented as prophesying about the future coming of a great prophet (Deut. 18:15-18 cf. John 4:19). 2) That Moses also established that the criterion for knowing the true prophets was the fulfillment of their predictions (Deut. 18:21-22). 3) The prophet Jeremiah predicted that Israel would suffer military defeat and exile (Jer. 3:12-14) and would also return to the land (Jer. 3:18; see also Jer 23: 8; Ezek 11:17; Hos 1:11; Mic 2:12; Zec 10:6-10. See Stefan, "The Paraclete," 275.

Jesus, the period of the Spirit-filled community of worshipping disciples.¹²⁸

This is seen as the only occurrence in the New Testament where this verb (*λαλειν*, to speak) is used to describe the activity of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁹ De La Potterie believes that by using the verb *λαλειν*, John may probably want to suggest that the action of the Spirit is in view of a continuation of that of Jesus, which was a revelation (expressed with the words *λογος* and *λαλειν*).¹³⁰ Given that Jesus proclaims that he is the way and the truth (14:6), it seems evident that he is telling the disciples that the Spirit of truth will also replace Jesus in this function.¹³¹ So, just as Jesus expressed that he speaks only what he heard from his Father (8:28; 12:49), so the Spirit of truth will speak what that one had heard.¹³² In this context, the Spirit will not bring new revelation, or disclose new mysteries; rather, in the proclamation effected by him, the word that Jesus spoke continues to be efficacious.¹³³ So, the phrase ‘whatever he hears he will speak...’ signifies that the action of the Spirit involves repeating in the Church the words spoken by Jesus.

¹²⁸Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 88.

¹²⁹De La Potterie, “The Truth in Saint John,” 76.

¹³⁰Ibid., 76-77. De La Potterie clarifies that the difference between the revelation of Christ and that of the Spirit is that “the first was still veiled, in parables, whereas the second will be open, in the full light of day: in this second phase of revelation the role of the Spirit will not be to bring a new revelation, but to display in a clear light the words of revelation of Jesus.” Ibid. This was actually the essence of what 14:26 means, “the Paraclete/Advocate...will remind you of all that I have said to you.” This explains further that the Paraclete will let them understand the true essence and bearing of the words of Jesus.

¹³¹Wes Howard-Brook, *Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 347.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ridderbos, *John*, 536.

It is now the task of the Spirit of truth to guide the community of believers “into all the truth” (16:13a). Thus, Jesus goes on to remind his disciples that the Spirit of truth “will not speak on his own authority (16:13).¹³⁴ The Paraclete is the Spirit of truth whom Jesus will send after his departure from this world (“I will send them to you...” 16:7). The task which the Paraclete performs is the “preservation of the revelation in its entirety, integrally: ‘whatever he hears he will speak’ in 16:13.”¹³⁵

He will declare to you... (ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν)

This passage, “he will declare to you the things that are to come,” cannot be claimed as a completely new pronouncement extending beyond Jesus’ revelation, but rather a new disclosure of future events.¹³⁶ In other words, the Spirit does not offer a new revelation independent of Christ.¹³⁷ What is attributed to the Paraclete here is that he will guide the community into the future and make clear to it what is coming.¹³⁸ Here, the Evangelist draws the reader’s attention to the predictive function of the Paraclete, a function materialized through the prophetic utterances of the Johannine believers. Stefan clarifies that in the Johannine community all believers were potential prophets, whose prophecies might include prediction of future events.¹³⁹

De La Potterie compared this expression to a reprise and it constitutes the most important element of the

¹³⁴Marrow, *John*, 293.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Schnackenburg, *John*, 135.

¹³⁷Talbert, *Reading John*, 219.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Stefan, “The Paraclete,” 276.

promise.¹⁴⁰ This compound verb *anangellein* should be understood not just simply to “announce,” but rather it is best understood as “to announce or reveal something which up to now has been unknown or secret.”¹⁴¹ As noted, this word occurs frequently in LXX of Isaiah and Jeremiah (Is. 40:1-11; Jer. 18:2, 50:2), as well as in the apocalyptic literature in the special sense of “revealing the hidden meaning of a dream or mystery.”¹⁴² This brings us to the insight that the role of the Spirit-Paraclete is significant—to interpret, through the Church, the revelation of Jesus, which is still not fully understood; and that “he will have to reveal to them its true meaning and all that it implies.”¹⁴³ In other words, the Church has the promise of the Spirit of truth to guide it into the “truth-as-a-whole” (v. 13), which can only be fully revealed at the end, when “the things that are to come” have fully come.¹⁴⁴

That the Spirit will “declare to you the things that are to come” (16:13) serves as a reminder to the believers that the eschatological nature of the revelation is not a promise of apocalyptic spectacles.¹⁴⁵ Marrow further comments,

With the advent of the Revealer into the world, the “end” is already here; and because it is already here, the future of the believers is secure and lies open before them. The security and assurance about the future that is genuinely theirs is the constant task of the Paraclete: “to be with you for ever (14:16).”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 77.

¹⁴¹Cf. Zorell, *Lexicon graecum Novi Testamenti*, s.v.

¹⁴²De La Potterie, ‘The Truth,’ 77 n.27.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Newbigin, *The Light Has Come*, 217.

¹⁴⁵Marrow, *John*, 293.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

This phrase points to the following: 1) first, the hour that is coming, that is, the time of Jesus' glorification; 2) second, the significance of Jesus' teaching for the time of the church after Jesus' glorification; or 3) third, the ultimate future.¹⁴⁷

In this verse we are led to understand the Paraclete as the one who guides the disciples to the full truth of what Jesus has said. The Paraclete's role as a guide traces back to the Old Testament background, concretely in LXX of Isaiah Lxiii 14 where we read: "The spirit came down from the Lord and guided them along the way." But for Brown the "spirit," "way," and "truth" have a meaning in Johannine thought that goes beyond the OT.¹⁴⁸ It involves a way of life in conformity with Jesus' teaching.¹⁴⁹ So, the Paraclete is to guide men [sic] *along the way of all truth*.¹⁵⁰

Isaiah 41:21-29, on the other hand offers an insight about what was expected of prophecy in antiquity. In this particular narrative Yahweh challenges the idol-gods of the nations to present their case by uttering true prophecy. This means two things: 1) it tells us the former things that we may know; 2) it declares to us things to come that we may know.¹⁵¹ Hence, prophecy was understood to include both an interpretation of the past and a prediction of the future.¹⁵² Applying this to our text, John 16:13-15 ascribes to the Spirit of prophecy - He will take what belongs to the past, that is, Jesus' revelation on earth, and interpret it for a new situation.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷Talbert, *Reading John*, 219.

¹⁴⁸R. E. Brown, *John*, 715.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁵¹Talbert, *Reading John*, 219.

¹⁵²*Ibid.*

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

In this final Paraclete saying of the Farewell Discourse, we decipher common characteristics of the Paraclete sayings. It presented clearly a Christocentric function of the Paraclete. The Paraclete does not reveal anything except for what he hears from the Son (and the Father).¹⁵⁴ Hence, the Spirit of Truth, the title of the Paraclete, also implicitly shows the christocentricity of the Paraclete.¹⁵⁵ That if Jesus is the Truth (14:6), the Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth (Jesus). This goes to say that there is no independent revelation through the Paraclete, but by carrying on Christ's work the Paraclete ensures that the revelation does not die out with Jesus' departure.¹⁵⁶

The Paraclete, like Jesus, will not speak "from himself, or on his own, but whatever he hears (Jn 5:19, 30; 8:26, 28, 40; 14:10); in the same manner in which Jesus speaks for the Father, so the Paraclete speaks for Jesus. Whereas Jesus speaks what he hears from the Father, the impression the Evangelist gives to the reader is not that each of Jesus' utterances is a repetition of something he just heard *from* the Father, but rather that Jesus speaks *on behalf* of the Father. Hence, it is logical to assert that the Paraclete does not necessarily speak what he hears *from* the exalted Christ, but rather he speaks *for* Christ.¹⁵⁷

The other significant point in this Paraclete saying is that it is directed to the community of believers. The Paraclete's function of declaring "the things that are to come" points to the function in the post-Easter community (v. 13). The notion that the Paraclete will declare things to come does not mean that he will reveal

¹⁵⁴Kin, "The Paraclete," 267.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Hawkin, *The Johannine World*, 74.

¹⁵⁷Stefan, "The Paraclete," 287.

anything fresh from Jesus' revelation.¹⁵⁸ Rather, it shows that the Paraclete will guide the Christian community in the future time.

The Prophetic Function of the Paraclete

Three passages in our exploration identify the Spirit as the Paraclete (14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13). These sayings speak of the time of the Paraclete, that is, the time of the future community of believers. And that it is directed to the community of believers in the post-Easter period.¹⁵⁹ Here, the functions or tasks of the Paraclete are multivalent.¹⁶⁰ It remains with the disciples (14:17), teaches them (14:26; 16:14), reminding them of Jesus' teaching (14:26; see 2:22; 12:16), announces the future (16:13), and glorifies Jesus (16:14). In these tasks the Paraclete is seen to guide the community in (re)interpreting and understanding Jesus' revelation in new circumstances and through the passing of time.¹⁶¹ The Paraclete's prophetic function is to teach disciples the world that rejects the Spirit (14:17), confirming the rightness of their commitment while showing the world to be wrong about sin, justice and judgment (16:8-11). The Paraclete will convict the world of its sin and expose its guilt (16:8-11). This is the

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹S. S. Smalley, "'The Paraclete': Pneumatology in the Johannine Gospel and Apocalypse," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, eds. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), 289-300. As far as Smalley is concerned, Johannine pneumatology is viewed in two aspects: individual and corporate. The Paraclete sayings in the farewell discourse are connected to the community, i.e. the church. The Paraclete is "given to the church at large, to sustain the common life of believers after the resurrection, as promised Paraclete."

¹⁶⁰Warren Carter, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006), 211.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

function of Christian prophecy,¹⁶² and the prophetic function of the Paraclete. The Paraclete completes the revelation that was begun in the historical Jesus.¹⁶³ From John's perspective truth means revelation, and that Jesus is both the act and the content of that revelation, "I am the truth (14:6)." Hence, the Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth who is the only one who reveals the mind of Christ to the community.

Conclusion

Like the prophet, the Paraclete teaches, reminding the Johannine disciples of the sayings of Jesus and bearing witness to Jesus through them. And through indwelling, the Paraclete can have a relationship with the disciples (14:7), reveal the identity of Jesus (14:20), teach and remind them of Jesus' sayings (14:25-26), bear witness to Jesus (15:26), reprimand the world (16:8-11) and lead the disciples in all truth (16:13).

In the texts explored, it is revealed that Jesus continued to communicate with the disciples and with the coming generations of believers. This communication is mediated by the Spirit-Paraclete, who will reveal new things to the community.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶²Boring, "The Influence," 119.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴As Painter says, "[t]he role of the Spirit is set out in terms of the significance of Jesus for future generations. His task is to glorify Jesus. That does not change. But the teaching does, as it is made relevant to the ever-changing situations. In the new and bewildering situations the Spirit would guide the way, bound to Jesus but not bound to the past. Thus the truth of eternity is to be unveiled as the situations arise for which it is relevant. The new is bound to Jesus because, he asserts, 'All that the Father has in mine.' In this, however, there is no harking back to a fossilized tradition, rather there is the ministry of a living voice which speaks anew to each generation and situation." John Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 432. Similar argument is supported by

Even if Jesus will go to the Father, his voice will remain audible through the Paraclete.¹⁶⁵ Hence, he will continue to teach succeeding generations of believers. As Jesus prophesied during his earthly ministry, he will continue to do so through the Paraclete. The Paraclete may reveal the future prophetically, but the prophecy itself comes from the exalted Christ whose words are Spirit and Life, conveying eternal life to those who receive his words¹⁶⁶ and believe in him (John 20:31). This is a worthy reminder for us as an ecclesial community—so relevant for our times.

Stefan, “The Paraclete,” 294.

¹⁶⁵Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 294.

¹⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 296.

Research Notes

Do “Non-Christian” Religions Have a Role in God’s Salvific Plan?

Nicole Tilman*

As elementary schoolkids, every year in October, we received in our school the visit of a missionary coming from a faraway place in Africa or Asia, to share with us some stories about their work and adventures in the mission field. They told us how they had been involved in “saving” the African or Asian souls from eternal damnation by baptizing them and receiving them into the Catholic Church, and how they had participated in the establishment of new commissions by erecting new church buildings. Nevertheless, the only thing we heard about other religions, was that they were all “pagan” religions. Since their missionary work was before the internet, it might have been very difficult for these well-meaning missionaries to stay updated with the *aggiornamento* wind blowing through the Church

♦ A native from Belgium, Dr. Nicole Tilman, M.D., graduated in 1979 as a Medical Doctor from the Free University of Brussels, and in 1983 from the Catholic University of Louvain with a degree of Bachelor in Philosophy. From 1986 to 1996 she was active in Taiwan in workers’ apostolate and was also instrumental to the birth of the Taiwan Association for Victims of Occupational Injuries. In the Philippines, she co-founded in 2007 the Kariton Empowerment Center which caters to street families. In 2015, she finished her MA in Religious Studies, Major in Scripture at the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS). At present she teaches in IFRS, Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia (ICLA), and Maryill School of Theology (MST), while taking a PhD in Theology at ICLA.

during and after the Second Vatican Council.

Most of us, except maybe for the younger ones, are indeed familiar with the centuries-old Christian adage “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*.” Fortunately, much has changed in the Church teachings concerning the salvation of non-Christians, especially since Vatican II. Our ways of dealing with the world religions have also become much more respectful and even more informed and understanding, thanks to the increase in real contacts and sharing of life with bearers of other religious traditions. Still, the attitude of Christians toward other religions is not without problems, and differences keep initiating heated debates. Furthermore, in our postmodern age of globalization this has become a pressing issue as the world religions are not anymore just geographically localized but are found everywhere.

In this paper, I will look first into the postmodern situation that made the issue of dealing with non-Christian religions more important than ever. In the second section, I will deal with the evolution of the Catholic Church’s teachings and attitudes toward other religions. The third section will then bring forward some ideas and proposals from various theologians. Their contributions may help us outgrow or even transcend the present impasse in the debate (see p. 168, below).

Before moving to the first section, let me say a few words about the term “non-Christian.” In what follows, I will use, as much as possible, the terms “other religions” or “world religions” rather than “non-Christian religions.” Likewise, instead of “non-Christian,” I will use “religious other.” First of all, it is not respectful to speak about people in terms of what they are not. Most of us would not appreciate it if, for example, a Hindu scholar would lump our religion together with others and just call us “non-Hindu religions.” Secondly, the term “non-Christian religions” would install our

Christian or Catholic religion as “the Center”, as if we should be the reference point for the other religious traditions.

Relating with other religions: a pressing matter

Middle Ages and Modernity

During the Middle Ages, the known world was limited and the Church assumed that the Gospel had been spread to wherever it could be spread. Besides, the Church was also preoccupied with spotting and punishing whoever was deemed to be a heretic. When later the continents beyond Europe were “discovered,” missionaries followed in the tracks of the colonizers and of those involved in commerce, in order to “save souls” and “plant the Church and churches.” And they believed that it would take only a relatively limited time before most people would be converted to Christianity.

Modernity can be considered as both a historical period as well as the interrelated historical processes and cultural phenomena that arose in the wake of the Renaissance (14th and 15th centuries, with its increasing interest in history and in human beings and their achievements), the Reformation (14th and 15th centuries, which challenged Church teachings and actions of the clergy), the Global Explorations (15th to 17th centuries, with its consequences for trade and economy), and the Scientific Revolution and Age of the Enlightenment (17th and 18th centuries, with the widespread application of the ‘Scientific Method’ and the emphasis on reason).¹ It thus started in Europe but later on became more worldwide in influence.² Manfred B. Steger different-

¹Marvin Perry, et al., *A History of the World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 323.

²Anthony Giddens, *Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA:

iates between an “Early Modern Period” (1500 – 1750) and a “Modern Period” (1750 – 1970).³ These two eras have gradually led to tremendous changes: 1) from multiple technological innovations and the development of ‘objective’ science, to an extra-ordinary explosion of science and technology and faith in an inevitable progress; 2) from industrialization, rise of the metropolitan centers and of the nation state, urbanization, individualism, unlimited material accumulation, to the foundation of a capitalist world system based on a free market economy; 3) from exploration and colonization (followed later by de-colonization) of the non-Western world with development of new interregional markets and economic transactions, to an excessive liberalization of the world trade; 4) from proliferation of mass media and development of communication technology, to a rapidly shrinking world and the beginning of the era of globalization; 5) from the liberation of rationality from the irrationalities of myths and religion, to secularization; and 6) from the belief that destiny is controlled by laws that reside in natural and social life, to belief in the “perfectibility of humanity by humanity.”⁴ Such changes posed enormous challenge to the Church’s self-understanding and practices especially in relation to other religions.

Stanford University Press, 1991), 1.

³Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 28-35.

⁴Ibid.; John C. Sivalon, *God’s Mission and Postmodern Culture: The Gift of Uncertainty* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2013), 26-28.

Postmodernity⁵

Our postmodern world is increasingly religiously pluralistic, being considered as the “age of religion”.⁶ As of today the world counts 2.1 billion Christians, 1.5 billion Muslims, 1.1 Secular/Non-religious/Agnostic/Atheist people, 900 million Hindus, 394 million people belonging to the Chinese traditional religions (which include Confucianism and Taoism among others), 375 million Buddhists, 300 million primal indigenous people, 100 million belonging to African traditional and diasporic religions, 14 million Jewish people, and 500 thousand people practicing Scientology.

These statistics also show that the Muslims increased with twice as many members as the Christians if we compare with the data of the same

⁵Postmodernity’ and ‘postmodernism’ are relatively contentious terms. Although sociologist Anthony Giddens prefers to speak about ‘beyond modernity,’ he still differentiates ‘postmodernism’ as pertaining to aesthetic reflection in the fields of art and architecture, from ‘postmodernity’ in the sense of social development away from modernity: Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990) 45-54. Indeed, postmodernism became first noticeable among the artistic avant-garde starting around 1945, whereas postmodernity developed only later among the academics. Ideas were gradually exported from France to England, Germany and the U.S. But even those who consider themselves as ‘postmodernists’ show different interests: Jean-François Lyotard for example speaks about the ‘postmodern condition’ as incredulity toward metanarratives. Jean Baudrillard considers our media-dominated world in which everything has become illusions or ‘simulacra,’ as unreal as in Plato’s world. And as a Marxist, Fredric Jameson writes about late capitalism: J.-F. Lyotard, *La Condition Postmoderne: Report Sur Le Savoir* (Paris: Les Editions De Minuit, 1979); J. Baudrillard, *Simulacres Et Simulation* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1981); F. Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998* (London: Verso, 1998).

⁶Edgar G. Javier, “Religion, Dialogue, and Spirituality— *Nostra Aetate* (in Our Time),” *Missio Inter Gentes* v.2, no.1 (2016): 55.

website in 2004.⁷

We should also bear in mind that postmodernism, rejects metanarratives as authoritarian and oppressive, and prefers instead particularity, diversity, localism and relativism.⁸ This is one of the reasons why a multitude of smaller groups or sects like for instance the Charismatic Movement, El Shaddai, and World Social Buddhism, to name but a few, are developing at a relatively fast pace.

Globalization

Arguably the most distinctive feature of post-modernity is the process of “globalization.” As of today, there is no agreed-upon definition of globalization in the academe⁹, but according to Richard Bliese, a consensus about its elements is beginning to be formed among sociologists, philosophers and theologians: (1) it is a continuation and expansion of the modernization

⁷<http://www.adherents.com> / accessed 20 June 2018.

⁸Liotard, *La Condition Postmoderne*, 54-68; Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press and Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 6-7.

⁹Manfred B. Steger compares this situation with the ancient Buddhist parable of the blind scholars and the elephant. Each scholar has to describe the elephant by touching it, but each can only describe one part of the animal depending on his or her position: M.B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11-12. And so, a sociologist for example would see globalization as “a concept [that] refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole”: Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: SAGE Publications, 1992), 8. Or, a professor of international relations would say that “Globalization compresses the time and space aspects of social relations”: J. H. Mittelman (ed.), *Globalization: Critical Reflections*, International Political Economy Yearbook, Vol. 9 (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997), 3.

process in the West which is based in a capitalistic economy; (2) the recent developments in the fields of technology, communication and commerce have accelerated this process which leads to an always increasing interconnectedness of the whole world and to the formation of a uniform global culture; (3) but, as modernization has been exported outside the West, it has also been affected by the receiving cultures so that the West is also changed in the process; (4) and, as the homogenizing force of globalization is destroying local values, it also brings about the reaction of reassertion and revitalization of local cultures.¹⁰

Keywords for our present topic are: “increasing interconnectedness of the whole world,” “formation of a uniform global culture,” but on the other hand also “changing of the West[ern culture] by the receiving cultures,” and “reaction of reassertion and revitalization of local cultures.” It is thus clear that globalization is fostering cultural pluralism in the whole world. The world has become a “global village,” with all kinds of cultures constantly “rubbing elbows” with one another, whether electronically or physically.

According to Pio Estepa, sociologists have noticed several “megatrends” in this era of globalization: (1) mega-migration, (2) mega-urbanization, and (3) mega-mediatization.¹¹ Migration¹² means either internal

¹⁰Richard H. Bliese, “Globalization,” in Karl Müller, Theo Sundermeier, Stephen B. Bevans, and Richard H. Bliese, eds., *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 172-178.

¹¹Pio Estepa, “The Asian Mission Landscape of the 21st Century,” *SEDOS Bulletin* 43, no. 5/6 (May-June 2011): 115-126; Edgar G. Javier, “The Missionary amidst Different Cultures and Religious Traditions: Re-imaging the Missionary Identity in Contemporary Times,” *Religious Life Asia* 13/3 (July-September 2011): 52.

¹²For more information on a) Migration: Brian Keeley, *International Migration: The human face of globalization* (OECD

migration from the rural areas to the cities, or external migration to other countries, usually for economic reasons or as refugees from war zones. Urbanization refers to the flight to the city, for most people also in search of “greener pastures.” Both these megatrends cause the mixing up of different cultures in a same geographical area. But also mediatization and an always increasing use of IT technology bring people from “all walks of life” into contact with one another. This cultural pluralism brings about religious pluralism¹³ as religion is probably the most important part of a culture, or even its “heart.”¹⁴

Lived reality of cultural and religious pluralism

Asia has always been “the” continent of cultural and religious pluralism, as it has given birth to all the largest world religions. Even Christianity was originally born in Asia although it spread first toward the West, so that the European missionaries, later on, brought the Christian faith back to the Asian continent. One cannot help but wonder how it could have been different

Publishing, 2009); Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal (eds.), *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008); Susanne Snyder, Joshua Ralston, and Agnes M. Brazal (eds.) *Church in an age of global migration: A moving body* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016); b) Urbanization: George Martin, Gordon McGranahan, Mark Montgomery and Rogelio Fernández-Castilla (eds.), *The New Global Frontier: Urbanization, Poverty and Environment in the 21st Century* (London: Earthscan, 2008); c) Mediatization: Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (NewYork: Routledge, 2013); Andreas Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

¹³Karl Rahner, “Toward a Fundamental Interpretation of Vatican II,” *Theological Studies* 40 (1979): 716-727; Peter C. Phan, “Doing Theology in the Context of Cultural and Religious Pluralism: An Asian Perspective,” *Louvain Studies* 27/1 (Spring 2002): 39-40.

¹⁴Its core which is most resistant to change. (Ed.)

(especially what concerns religious pluralism) if it had gone the other way around.... Despite all the efforts of generations of missionaries, Christianity remains a minority religion in Asia, so that in terms of world religions and of religious pluralism this continent has a lot of experience and knowledge to share with the rest of the world (see, the second and third sections of this paper, below).

The experience of living with other cultures and religions came later in the West. According to Robert Schreiter, it was only in 1965 that the Immigration Act “opened the doors of the United States to newcomers in an unprecedented way.”¹⁵ This development continued till the 1990s, and brought about not only multiculturalism, but also religious pluralism. Although Europe originally did not have a lot of contact or experience with religions other than Christianity and the Jewish faith, it is slowly “catching up,” as during the recent years it has been confronted with continuous waves of refugees originating from Syria and Iraq as well as from other war-stricken countries, most of whom are Muslim.

It has thus become a “fact on the ground” that wherever people are, there will always be close contacts with individuals belonging to other religions. If all have to work together for the betterment of our world, there is an urgent need to get to know not only each other’s cultures but also each other’s religions (it being the “heart” of one’s culture). Interfaith and interreligious dialogue¹⁶ become so an urgent need. The Christian Churches have therefore to face the challenge and task

¹⁵Robert Schreiter, “The Church of Tomorrow: Multiculturalism and Globalization,” *Origins* 32/22 (2002): 366-367.

¹⁶“Interreligious Dialogue” takes place among religious traditions or systems, while “Interfaith Dialogue” happens among the followers of religious traditions or systems.

of reviewing and improving their attitudes toward other religions so that dialogue and cooperation between religions will become possible and really contribute to justice, peace, and harmony in the world.

Dealing with other religions: a difficult matter for our catholic church

The Logos Theology

The three Church Fathers Justin, Irenaeus, and Clement were the proponents of different versions of a “Logos Theology,” which was called *Logos spermatikos* for Justin, *Logos emphutos* for Irenaeus, and *Logos protreptikos* for Clement. In all three it refers to “a manifestation of God in the Logos before the incarnation of the Word,”¹⁷ which means from creation all throughout human history. All three also state that the manifestation of God in the Logos culminates in God’s becoming human in Jesus Christ. This “seeds of the Word” theory is important today, as it leads to a positive approach to other religions. These “seeds” would indeed function as a preparation for the message of Jesus Christ.

According to Dupuis, there are still some questions concerning whether this Logos refers to the Word in the Prologue of John, or to the immanent “reason” of the Stoa and Philo of Alexandria, or to an integration of these two. If it is to John, then it refers to a “literary personification” of the Word of God (*Dabar*) which corresponds to God in the Old Testament, as God manifests Godself in words and deeds.¹⁸

Biblical scholar Roland E. Murphy on the other hand

¹⁷Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 70-77.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

reminds us of the Wisdom background of John 1:1-18.¹⁹ Indeed in the Old Testament's wisdom literature "wisdom" is personified as a woman: Lady Wisdom. Most of her attributes were later transferred to Jesus (the Word) in John's prologue: both were in the beginning with God, they were co-creators with God, they provided light, they were also in the world, rejected by their own, and received by the faithful. Wisdom was even like Christ "the door and the good shepherd," as well as "the way." In her research on Sophia, Joyce Rupp noticed that Philo as a Jew knew Lady Wisdom/Sophia, and that he taught that Yahweh had first created Sophia and then the Logos (the Word) as they were envisioned to work "together in shaping creation: Sophia, the feminine or creating vessel, and Logos, the masculine or active doer." Eventually, Philo was not able to keep the two separated so that he only kept the male Logos.²⁰ This history of the Logos shows us the interconnectedness and mutual "borrowing" of different religions and philosophies.

"Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" and reaction

Walter Kasper relates how this axiom was first explicitly mentioned in Origen's Joshua homilies, as well as by Cyprian of Carthage.²¹ But for both, the context was not the other religions, but those who had been baptized and were in danger of leaving again the Church. Augustine's pupil Fulgentius of Ruspe on the

¹⁹Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 146.

²⁰Joyce Rupp, "Desperately Seeking Sophia," *U.S.Catholic*. <http://www.uscatholic.org/church/scripture-and-theology/2008/07/desperately-seeking-sophia> / accessed June 21, 2018.

²¹Walter Kasper, *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 115-116.

other hand understood it as pertaining to the non-salvation of non-believers or non-baptized. In 1215 the fourth Lateran Council also took it in this way. Pope Boniface VIII applied it even to all those who did not subject themselves to the pope! The Council of Florence in 1442 finally stated that “no heathen, unbeliever or one separated from the unity could attain eternal life but was condemned to the eternal fire.”²²

Later, especially during its opposition to Jansenius, the Church maintained on the other hand that “Jesus Christ had died for all people,” and they rejected that there was no grace outside the Church. Like Thomas Aquinas, and even before him the Church Father Ambrose, the Council of Trent adopted the theory of justification through the “baptism of desire.” This desire did not even have to be explicit, as it could be an unconscious desire.²³ From then on the Church recognized the possibility for people outside the Church to be saved!

The Fulfillment Theory

This theory, proposed by predominantly French theologians like Jean Daniélou and Henri de Lubac, considers the religions outside the Judeo-Christian tradition to be part of the “prehistory” of salvation. They are a “preparation” or “stepping stones” for the Gospel. They are to be considered as belonging to the order of natural reason and as part of the cosmic covenant with Noah, symbolized by the rainbow. Their knowledge of God is also obtained through the order of nature (the world or personal conscience), not through the grace of God. These religions are made up of both truth and falsehood, right conduct and evil ways. They contain

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

traces of God (seeds of the Word) and traces of sin. Christianity will unveil their positive values: “by assuming them, it purifies and transforms them.”²⁴ The religions themselves play no role in salvation. It is the mystery of Christ that reaches the members of these religions in response to the human desire for God. This theology underlies several of the Vatican II documents.

Anonymous Christians

This theory of “anonymous Christianity” developed by Karl Rahner is already an improvement on the fulfillment theory: it is “the hidden, unknown operative presence of the mystery of Christ in other religious traditions.”²⁵ This means that “Christian salvation reaches them, anonymously, through these traditions.”²⁶ So, there are supernatural elements of grace in these religions. The members of these religions live this anonymous Christianity through the sincere practice of their own traditions. “The anonymous Christian is a Christian unaware.” But Rahner also mentions that this anonymous Christianity remains “a fragmentary, incomplete, radically crippled reality.”²⁷ With the debate between the fulfillment theory and anonymous Christianity, the “theology of religions” was born.

²⁴Jean Daniélou, *The Lord of History: Reflections on the Inner Meaning of History* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958); Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958); de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998); Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 138.

²⁵Karl Rahner, “Anonymous Christians,” in *Theological Investigations* 6 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1969), 390-398; Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 143-149.

²⁶Edgar G. Javier, *Dialogue: Our Mission Today* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2006), 164.

²⁷Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 146.

Vatican II

The aim of this Council concerning the other religions, was predominantly to foster better relationships, understanding, dialogue and cooperation.²⁸ The important documents pertaining to this include: *Lumen Gentium* (16-17), *Nostra Aetate* (2), and *Ad Gentes* (3, 9, 11). There are three major questions here. The first one is about the salvation of people outside the Church. Since that was already considered as a possibility before Vatican II, the Council only affirmed this. The second question is about the positive values in other religions. Here also the answer was positive as can be noticed in the 1984 document published by the Secretariat for Non-Christians. The terminology they used shows this very clearly: “elements which are true and good” (LG 16), “seeds of contemplation” (AG 18), “elements of truth and grace” (AG 9), “seeds of the Word” (AG 11, 15), and “rays of that Truth which illumines all humankind” (NA 2). The third question is the most critical as it concerns the role of the religions in salvation. In other words, was Vatican II able to transcend the fulfillment theory? Although the elements of “truth and grace” found “as a sort of secret presence of God” (AG 9) seem to suggest this, the Council did not explicitly acknowledge the role of the other religions in salvation.²⁹

Paul VI

Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* was published during Vatican II in 1964. Noteworthy is the appearance of the word “dialogue,” as it promoted the dialogue of the Church with (1) the entire world, (2) members of other religions, (3) with other Christian

²⁸Ibid., 158-170.

²⁹Ibid.

Churches, and (4) within the Church. Although we find in this document also a respect for the moral and spiritual values of other religions, the stress on the exclusiveness of Christianity as the “one true religion” (ES 655) is very clear.³⁰ Likewise, in his 1975 encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, written in response to the 1974 Synod of Catholic Bishops on Evangelization in the Modern World, the pope expresses his strong suspicion of religious pluralism and reminds us again that Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation “which other religions cannot achieve” (EN 53). Besides, no word is said about interreligious dialogue. This negativity toward other religions was certainly not corresponding with many opinions expressed during the Synod according to Dupuis.³¹

John Paul II

What can be considered as a major contribution from Pope John Paul II is his emphasis on the presence of God’s Spirit in the religious life of the “religious others” as well as in the religions to which they belong. This is especially the case in his encyclicals *Dominum et Vivificantem* of 1986, and in *Redemptoris Missio* of 1990. We find here expressions as “action of the Holy Spirit even before Christ” (DV 53) and “the wind blows where it wills” (DV 53). He also seems to be open to “participated forms of mediation,” although these only acquire meaning from Christ’s own mediation. But then, in his apostolic exhortation *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* of 1994, he resumes using the fulfillment theory.³²

³⁰Ibid., 170-172.

³¹Jonathan Y. Tan, *Christian Mission Among the Peoples of Asia* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 73. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 172.

³²Tan, *Christian Mission*, 73-74. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian*

“Dialogue and Proclamation”

This document, jointly published in 1991 by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples is the first to affirm that “it will be in the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious tradition and by following the dictates of their conscience that the members of other religions respond positively to God’s invitation and receive salvation in Jesus Christ, even while they do not recognize or acknowledge him as their Savior” (DP 29). This is the farthest that any Church document had yet gone.³³

The problem and the deadlocked debate

Religious Pluralism can be understood as either a reality (*de facto*), or a principle (*de principio, de iure*). Pluralism as a reality is what the Asian Church has been used to all throughout history. That is why they see the value and urgent necessity of interreligious dialogue. The Western Church on the other hand sees Religious Pluralism as a principle, more specifically the belief that the other religions have been positively wanted and intended by God, and so can be considered as ways of salvation. Presented like that, the other religions would then also be a variety of God’s self-manifestations (and so “revelation”) to humanity, and not only a natural human searching for the Divine.³⁴ This of course brings us right away into the debate between the positions of “exclusivism,” “inclusivism,” and “pluralism,”³⁵ which usually correspond with three

Theology, 177-178.

³³Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology*, 178.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 386.

³⁵Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the*

perspectives: “ecclesiocentric,” “Christocentric,” and “theocentric.” The first position/perspective pair means that it is the Church that saves, and that there is no salvation possible outside the Church. The second pair indicates that it is Christ who saves, while the third pair speaks about the fact that it is God who saves.

The Church which is very afraid of relativism and any affirmation of the equality of all religions, has been extremely cautious in attributing to the other religions any salvific role. This despite the fact, that according to Paul Knitter, pluralist theologians affirm the plurality and “mutuality” of the religions, not their “equality.”³⁶ Furthermore, the Church is also very concerned about “theocentrism,” as this could take Christ “out of the picture,” whereas for Christianity, Christ is the unique and universal savior!

This fear and the ensuing deadlock in the debate can, for example, be perceived indirectly in the following: First, in April – May 1998, there was what could be called a “clash” during the Roman Synod on Asia, between the Asian Bishops’ Conferences and the Vatican concerning the salvation of other religions. The Asian Bishops continuously requested for a rethinking of the relationship between Christianity and the other religions, to which John Paul II only responded by reiterating the fact of the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ for salvation (in his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*).³⁷ Secondly, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) headed by Cardinal Ratzinger issued the document *Dominus Iesus* in 2000, which according to Aloysius Pieris seemed again to imply that outside the Roman Catholic Church there is no

Christian Theology of Religions (London: S.C.M., 1983).

³⁶Paul F. Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 117-118.

³⁷Tan, *Christian Mission*, 81-89.

salvation possible.³⁸ Finally, several great theologians (Tony de Mello, Jacques Dupuis, Roger Haight, Jon Sobrino, Tissa Balasuriya, Peter Phan, and others) were investigated by the CDF because of issues related to the theology of religions.

How Can the Present Impasse be Transcended?

To break the deadlock and be able to grow toward genuine dialogue with the “religious other” and his or her religion, paradigm shifts have to be made in our understanding, and that in several different areas:

Methodology

Peter Phan, in his *The Joy of Religious Pluralism*, explains how the CDF’s methodology differs from his own. The CDF follows John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (no. 65) that states that there are two acts in the proper theological method: (1) “hearing the faith”: getting to know the revelation expounded in Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Church’s living Magisterium, and (2) “understanding the faith”: responding through speculative inquiry. Phan’s method on the other hand follows the one recommended by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC),

³⁸Aloysius Pieris, “The Roman Catholic Perception of Other Churches and Other Religions after the Vatican’s *Dominus Iesus*,” *East Asian Pastoral Review* 38/3 (2001): 211. Reflecting on postmodern culture, John C. Sivalon suggest that this document was caused by the fear of the church officials toward some changes (lack of belief in metanarratives, stress on relativity, etc.), brought about by postmodernism, which were being perceived as a threat. He calls this reaction a “romantic conservatism” which hearkens “back to an earlier period that is romanticized or idealized”: J.C. Sivalon, *God’s Mission and Postmodern Culture: The Gift of Uncertainty* (Quezon City: Claretian Publication, 2013), 32.

which starts from the contextual realities of life.³⁹ In other words, it is only by knowing and living with “religious others” and their religions, that we can say something meaningful about them. It is no wonder that it is precisely those who know religious pluralism from experience (the Asian bishops and theologians), those who know the millions of good and selfless people who became so thanks to (and not despite!) their other religions, who push for a “rethinking” of the relationship between Christianity and other religions. Unfortunately, if the hierarchical magisterium keeps on starting from the faith of the Church instead of from the “signs of the time” to write its theology, it will get more and more alienated from the reality and its people, on so many different issues, and the Galileo mistake will be repeated over and over again.

Pneumatology

When Phan writes about the presence of the Spirit in other religions, he refers back to the metaphor of Irenaeus: the “two hands of the Father,” Jesus and the Holy Spirit, through which the Father is active in history. Again influenced by the FABC approach, he reviews how the Spirit is at work in the various religious-cultural realities in Asia, and concludes that “Divine Spirit is actively present in non-Christian religions in and through the Holy Spirit and that to this extent these religions may be regarded as ‘ways of salvation’.”⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that the FABC’s Office of Theological Concerns (OTC) itself mentions that “We value pluralism as a great gift of the Spirit . . . People encounter the Spirit within their context, which is

³⁹Peter C. Phan, *The Joy of Religious Pluralism: A Personal Journey* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 21-49.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 51-74.

pluralistic in terms of religions, cultures and world-views. In this light, we affirm a stance of receptive pluralism.”⁴¹

Going back to the “two hands of the Father,” Phan mentions how the three divine persons are mutually dependent, but also how they have a “certain autonomy in being and acting.” This means that the Holy Spirit is active outside Jesus, before and after the incarnation, and outside Christianity, in other religions. Thus, the other religions have salvific value and function and are not merely “stepping stones” toward, or “fulfilled” by Christianity.⁴²

Christology

Phan addresses also the “uniqueness” and “universality” of Christ. He distinguishes between the Word (Logos) of God before incarnation, and the Word (Logos) of God after incarnation as Jesus of Nazareth. The first one is one of the “two hands of the Father,” and is actively present in history outside and without Jesus of Nazareth, unrestricted by place and time. Jesus of Nazareth was on the other hand limited in time and space, so that he could not have a salvific function for those who lived before him. The activities of the un-incarnated Word go beyond the earthly Jesus’ activities, before, during, and after the incarnation. This means again that God’s saving presence is not limited to the Judaeo-Christian history but is extended to the whole of human history. It also means that Logos and Spirit (the two hands) play both a unique and universal role in salvation. And they carry out this role in Christianity as

⁴¹Franz-Josef Eilers, ed., *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. Documents from 1997 to 2002*, vol.3 (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2002), 321.

⁴²Phan, *The Joy of Religious Pluralism*, 72-73.

well as in other religions.⁴³

Soteriology

Another area one could look into is the definition of “salvation.” Several authors have proposed that salvation might not mean the same thing in all religions. This made Phan propose a “multisalvational” theology of religion, whereas S. Mark Heim argues for a “true religious pluralism, in which the distinctiveness of various religious ends is acknowledged.”⁴⁴ But even in our official documents concerning interreligious dialogue there is often confusion. Philip Cunningham, in his review of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews’ document, *The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable*, mentions that the word “salvation” is used forty-two times without stating anywhere which of the several possible meanings are being used.⁴⁵

Hermeneutics

S. Wesley Ariarajah makes us aware of the danger of “proof-texting.” Sometimes theologians just base their theories on a few verses taken from the Bible, instead of on the whole biblical message. But what they forget is the fact that it is often possible to find other verses that say exactly the opposite. What concerns salvation, one of the verses that is often used is Jn 14:6: “Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one

⁴³Ibid., 75-124.

⁴⁴Peter C. Phan, “Universal Salvation, Christian Identity, Church Mission,” in *Japan Mission Journal* 64/1 (Spring 2010): 9-10. S. Mark Heim, *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995) 7.

⁴⁵Philip A. Cunningham, “Gifts and Calling: Coming to Terms with Jews as Covenantal Partners,” in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 12, no.1 (2017): 3-6.

comes to the Father except through me.” An example of the opposite would be Acts 10:34-35: “³⁴Then Peter began to speak to them: ‘I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.’” Another example would be Mark 10 where a man asks Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life. The answer is direct: “sell everything you have and give it to the poor.” Nothing is said about being baptized or joining the followers of Jesus.⁴⁶ Related with this is the complaint of biblical scholars that Church documents often show a lack of interpretative skills, for example when they are completely devoid of historical criticism which would have taken into consideration the historical and socio-cultural background of texts. For instance, what concerns our topic of salvation, it is known that almost all the “exclusive” saying in the New Testament were written in the context of some kind of polemical situation!⁴⁷ They might thus not be the best basis to build universal claims on...

Women’s Voices

Although not many feminists have ventured into the field of religious pluralism, those who did can provide us with yet untrodden directions and challenges. Five of them will be briefly reviewed: three Christians and two “religious others.” Well known author Rosemary Radford Ruether states that as all religions have a history of androcentrism and patriarchy, none of them has allowed the divine to be experienced in ways defined

⁴⁶S. Wesley Ariarajah, “Interpreting John 14:6 in a Religiously Plural Society” in *Voices From the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 355-370.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 365.

by women. Interreligious dialogue between feminists therefore can correct that past marginalization of women as well as recover women's experiences of the divine.⁴⁸

Claremont's Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki neither agrees with exclusivism and inclusivism, nor with relativism. Influenced by process theology she sees creation as a continuous 'call and response' which requires pluralism in order to witness God's creative work with the whole world. When God's call is taken into the becoming world, God is 'radically incarnated' in this world which means that God is at work within all the different cultural, historical and religious contexts. God adapts God's revelation to our human conditions: it is not needed to use the same method of salvation for all. The internal love of God as Trinity is expressed outwardly through calling into being that which is most 'other' to God: the creature. Called to be image of God we too must learn to love beyond ourselves, to love the diversity of religious pluralism, the 'other.' And we should not forget that a mark of God's reign is our treatment of the 'stranger within our gates.'⁴⁹

Jeannine Hill Fletcher from the Fordham University draws on the rich insights of feminist theory when she claims that the categories of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism all fail because they assume the existence of exclusive and internally consistent religious identities, while other traditions are judged in terms of their sameness 'or' differences with these identities. In

⁴⁸Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Feminism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Particularism and Universalism in the Search for Religious Truth," in Paul Knitter and John Hick (eds.), *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1987), 137-148.

⁴⁹Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *Divinity and Diversity: A Christian Affirmation of Religious Pluralism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003).

fact the encounter with the 'religious other' is more often an encounter of 'both' sameness and difference. Here the author brings in the idea of Christian identity as multiple and hybrid. Indeed identities are not constructed on a singular feature (like gender or religion), but people belong to 'multiple spaces,' all 'aspects of identity' which are 'mutually informing.' So the identity of being a woman will be intersected by race, ethnicity, class, education, sexual orientation, age, religion, etc. 'Each element of identity and past experience combines with others in my own person and shapes my understanding and experience of Christian identity.' It is this fact of multiple and hybrid identity that allows us in interreligious encounters to honor differences and forge new solidarities.⁵⁰

The Christian-turned-Buddhist scholar Rita M. Gross gives us some pertinent questions to reflect on: 1) Why is it that precisely the two religions (Islam and Christianity) that acquired empires early in their existence are the ones that are most confident about their claims of universal relevance? 2) Why is that these religions that claim exclusive and universal truth for themselves are the ones that have caused so much harm and suffering? 3) Why don't we shift from looking for the 'truth' of a religion to looking for their 'morality,' their treatment of others, and their ability to bring about meaningful transformation toward kindness and compassion in their members?⁵¹

Jewish feminist Judith Plaskow discusses the relationship between sexism and the concept of

⁵⁰Jeannine Hill Fletcher, "Shifting Identity: The Contribution of Feminist Thought to Theologies of Religious Pluralism," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 19/2 (Fall 2003): 5-24.

⁵¹Rita M. Gross, "Excuse Me, but What's the Question?" in Paul F. Knitter (ed.), *The Myth of Religious Superiority: A Multifaith Exploration* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005), 75-87.

‘chosenness’ in Judaism, as she believes that the affirmation of ‘chosenness’ always implies some degree of superiority. Like the male is normative and superior in Judaism vis-à-vis the female, so is the Jew in comparison with the non-Jew. Indeed, in Judaism, differences are always understood in terms of a ‘hierarchical gradient.’ What needs therefore to be done is the ‘reconceptualization of the way that difference is understood and portrayed.’ This will permit Jewish men and women, and Jews and non-Jews, to live in acceptance and equality.⁵²

Humility

But perhaps what our Church lacks most is “humility.” We want to contain God and all of reality in our theologies and doctrines. Maybe it is also this “need to control,” because it makes us feel good and safe to control Reality within the boundaries of our theories. But God is mystery and freedom, and is not exhaustively known by any religion or by any person. As Elizabeth Johnson shares: “As different paths to salvation, the religions belong to the overflowing communication of the triune God, who speaks ‘in many and diverse ways.’” And this “rests on the magnificent, superabundant generosity of God who is Love.”⁵³

Conclusion

This paper tackled the issue of salvation for the religious ‘other’ and the salvific role of his or her religion. First it was shown how cultural and religious

⁵²Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990).

⁵³Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 178.

pluralism brought about by globalization and migration, have made this issue very pressing for our present times. Secondly, the evolution in our Church's teachings concerning other religions and salvation was reviewed. It is obvious that due to its fear of relativism, our hierarchical magisterium has been very reluctant to explicitly attribute any salvific role to the other religions. This has stifled the debate on religious pluralism and rendered interreligious dialogue more difficult and slow, almost reducing the relationship with other religious traditions to mere "tolerance." Thirdly, it was proposed that what is needed is a paradigm change in our understanding in different theological fields: (1) What concerns methodology, Western theology should adopt the way the Asian Bishops always start from the contextual realities rather than from the faith of the Church; (2) Both Irenaeus' "two hands of the Father," and the equally ancient Logos theory can be of help to show how both the Spirit and the Logos are at work in other religions even before the incarnation and so how both play a unique and universal role in salvation through these other religions; (3) There is a need to look into what "salvation" means for every religion, and to be clear in the meaning we give to the term in our own Church documents related to dialogue with other religions; (4) Our Church documents must also show enough updated hermeneutical skills⁵⁴ and avoid simple proof texting; (5) Our Church needs to listen to the wisdom embedded in so-often-marginalized women's voices; and, (6) Above all, our Church needs to become a

⁵⁴Hermeneutics is not limited to rules, tools, and skills in analysis and interpretation; hermeneutics, especially for the churches, must also involve the conscious espousal of a certain perspective—the perspective of Jesus who brought hope to the poor of his time when he announced and lived out his message of inclusion of the poor in his central message of the Reign of God. (Ed.)

humble Church that can recognize the mystery of God at work outside Christianity. God is indeed greater than our hearts.

Finally, the following passage from Mk 9:38-41 might summarize a bit the spirit of this paper:

³⁸John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." ³⁹But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward." (NRSV)